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ABSTRACT

Carisbrooke Castle in England, Charles I's prison for nearly a year, is a complex historic site with walls dating from the early 12th century and additions and alterations incorporated over later centuries. This guide may be used by teachers preparing their students for an on-site visit, or as an independent study of an English medieval castle. The guide is organized in three main sections. The first consists of background information on the building and its history. The second contains suggestions for teaching approaches, including preparation and follow-up work aimed mainly at the 9-12 year old range. Topics include: "Clues"; "Spies"; "The King, the Servant, and the Gaoler"; "Now and Then"; and "Wells, Walls, and Treadmills." Reproducible activity sheets are provided. The third section gives practical advice on how to organize a visit. A 42-item bibliography including books for teachers, books for children, films and videos, slides and software, posters, and cassettes and records, concludes the guide. (MM)

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Teachers' Resource Book

Carisbrooke Castle

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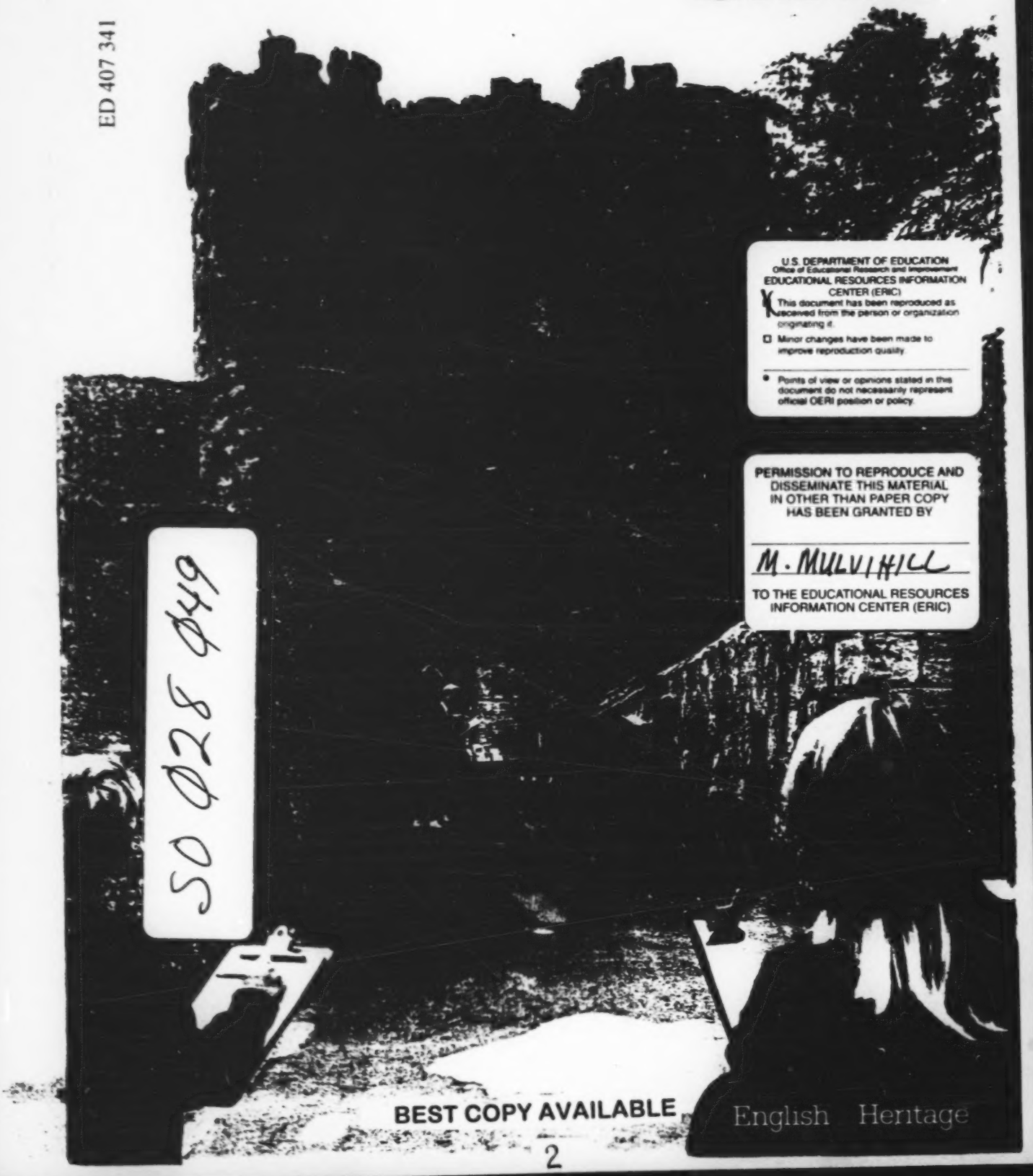

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Introduction

This book is intended to help teachers make use of Carisbrooke Castle. There are three main sections. The first consists of background information on the building and its history. The second contains suggestions for teaching approaches, including preparation and follow-up work. These ideas are pitched mainly at the 9 to 12 year old age range. Activity sheets are included and these may be photocopied. The third section gives practical information on how to organise a visit.

In recent years, the castle has been regularly visited by hundreds of school parties, taking advantage of the wealth of resources for learning which it provides. It is a complex site, with walls dating from the early twelfth century, with additions and alterations incorporated over the centuries, including medieval buildings, Elizabethan fortifications, Victorian adaptations and even a twentieth-century chapel. The castle was Charles I's prison for nearly a year and it is also famous for its well and donkey-operated treadwheel.

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Written by Rosemary Cooper

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Front cover: The gatehouse. (English Heritage)

Back cover: Scraperboard picture of the gatehouse by an 11 year old. (English Heritage)

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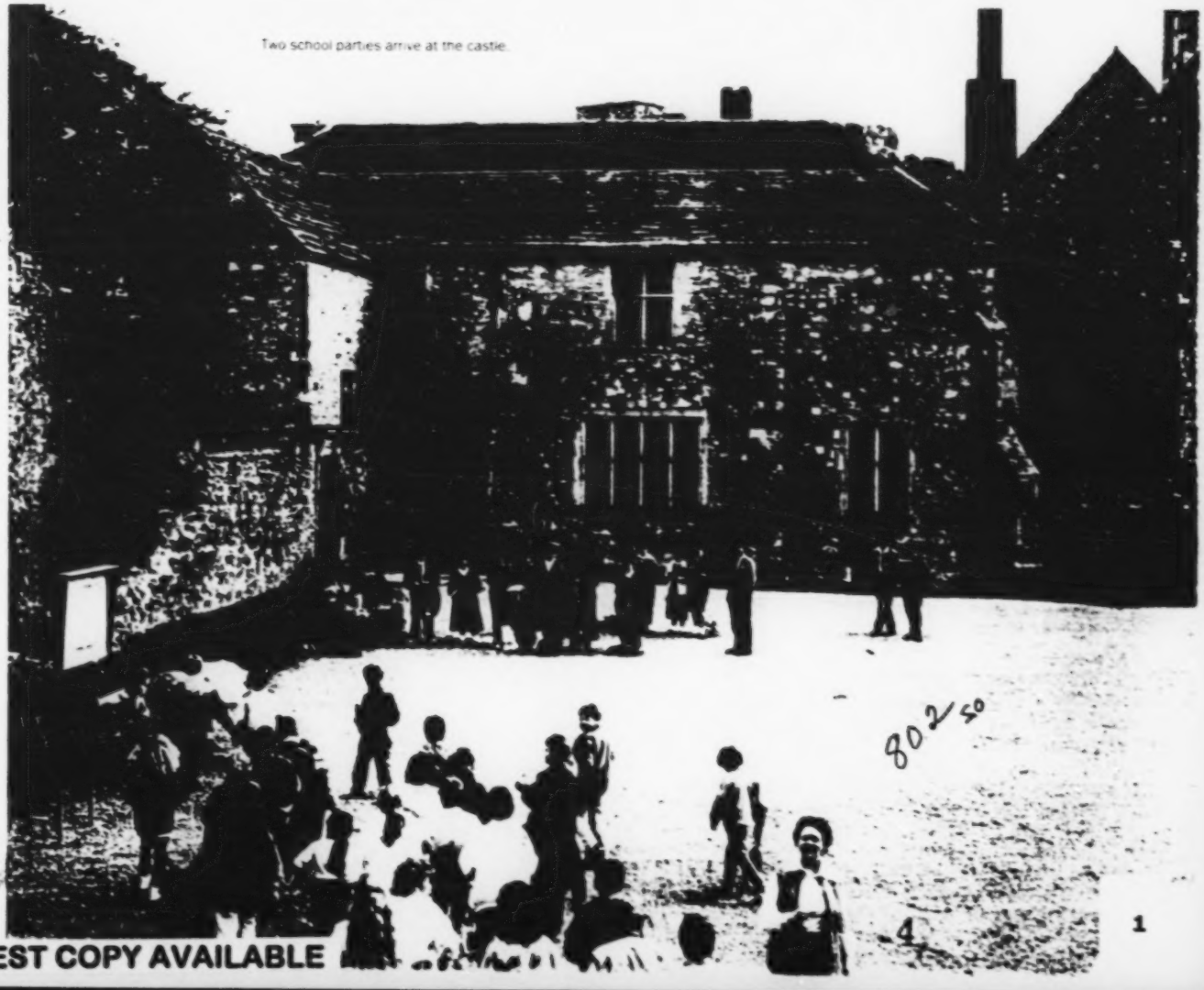

Two school parties arrive at the castle.

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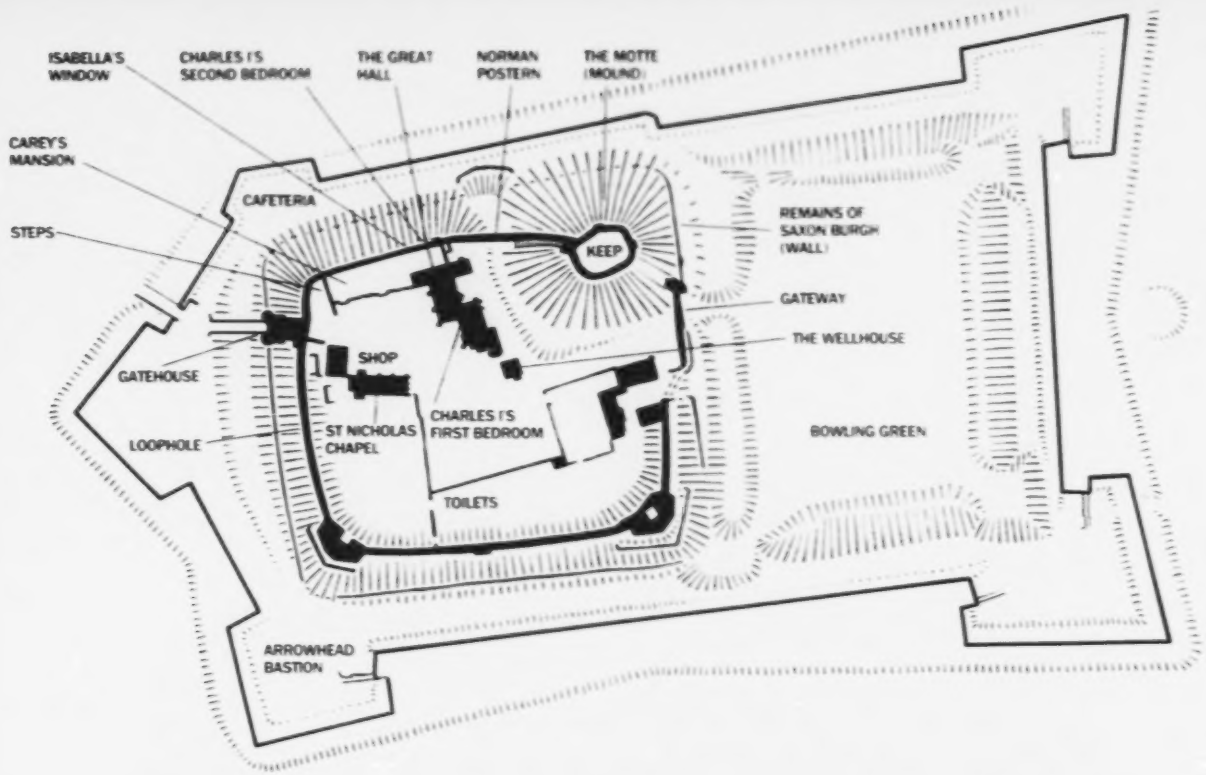


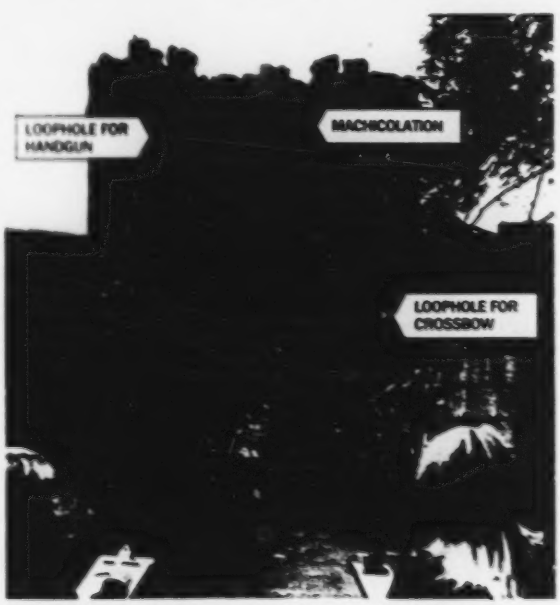
The Castle

Carisbrooke Castle stands on chalk downland near the middle of the Isle of Wight. To the south of the castle, the land slopes away gently, but to the north, it falls steeply to the valley below. Viewed from Carisbrooke village, on the opposite side of the valley, the castle is an impressive sight with its keep, its wall and its gatehouse crowning the top of the hill.

The entrances

The path into the castle passes first of all through a gateway in an outer line of defences added late in the reign of Elizabeth, and then crosses the moat by a stone bridge. Originally there would have been a drawbridge at this point. The moat has always been a dry moat, as the castle is built on top of a hill, and on chalk which is porous. This dry moat with the high steep bank rising from it made the castle walls very difficult to approach.

Just across the moat is the impressive medieval gatehouse. This has been the site of the castle entrance from the time the walls were built in the early 1100s. The original gatehouse was probably quite small, but over the centuries it was extended further from the wall to give extra protection to what was a weak point in a castle's defence. It is worth standing back to look carefully at the features of the gatehouse, as they illustrate, or provide evidence for, aspects of medieval castle warfare. On each side is a tower, round rather than square because corners were vulnerable to undermining by tunnels; they are known as 'drum towers' because of their shape. In the lower parts of the towers there are cross-shaped loopholes, designed for use with the crossbow; some of them are mutilated. At the top of the towers are examples of different loopholes, shaped like keyholes upside down, intended for use with early hand-guns. The tops of the towers, including these loopholes, were added in the late fourteenth century, to update the gatehouse at a time when the French were carrying out raids on the Island. At the top of the gatehouse, between the drum towers, a small piece of machicolation gave the defenders a chance to drop stones or boiling water on attackers who ventured too close.



The castle's medieval gatehouse with its examples of loopholes and machicolation.

Inside the gateway, portcullis channels provide further evidence of the castle's defences. Two of these channels are clearly visible. A third can also be picked out, but it is partly blocked up.

The keep

Although it is on the opposite side from the entrance, the keep makes a good point from which to start investigating the castle. The view from the walls of the keep puts the castle in context and also makes the layout easier to grasp.

The keep, the motte (or mound) on which it stands and the curtain wall were probably built in the early 1100s by the lord of the Isle of Wight, Richard de Redvers. They replaced a smaller earthwork fortification which had been put up quickly immediately after the Norman Conquest.

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Part of a collage of the Norman Conquest by Class 2 of Arreton Primary School, depicting a timber tower and palisade which may have preceded the stone keep and curtain wall at Carisbrooke.

Excavation has shown that the motte was made of layers of chalk, and it is interesting that the one the Normans built at Hastings is depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry with horizontal stripes. The keep is entered through a vaulted gateway, added in the fourteenth century, which has a channel for a portcullis.

The keep was a shell keep, consisting of a high enclosing wall with lean-to buildings inside it, not the traditional textbook square keep with dungeons at the bottom and lord's living accommodation above. A shell keep like this was not intended for living in, but as a fighting platform dominating the rest of the defences and for use as a last resort if the rest of the castle were captured. Inside the keep is the castle's original water supply, a well about 50 metres deep. It was unreliable because it depended on seepage water, and it did in fact dry up at a crucial time early in the castle's history: the lord of the Island, Baldwin de Redvers, who supported Matilda in the Civil War of King Stephen's reign, retreated to Carisbrooke in 1136 but had to surrender because he had no water. Two garderobes, or latrines, can also be seen in the keep. One has a round arch which indicates its Norman origin; the other, in the wall opposite the entrance, is fourteenth century.

The keep was built of limestone from the quarries at Quarr near Binstead on the Island. The small square holes

The Normans making a motte at Hastings (from the Bayeux Tapestry)

in the wall are putlog holes, left when scaffolding was removed after the wall was built.

A flight of steps leads to a fighting platform over the gatehouse, and to the top of the wall. From here, it is easy to see why William FitzOsbern, the first Norman lord of the Island, chose this site for a castle which was originally built to control conquered territory with a largely hostile population. On a clear day, there is a superb view in all directions.

The vantage point of the keep also gives a good opportunity to look at the castle's design – a typical Norman motte and bailey. The motte, with its keep, stands in one corner of the bailey, or courtyard, which contained the living accommodation, stabling and gardens.

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The castle from the air, showing the medieval motte and bailey enclosed by sixteenth-century fortifications.

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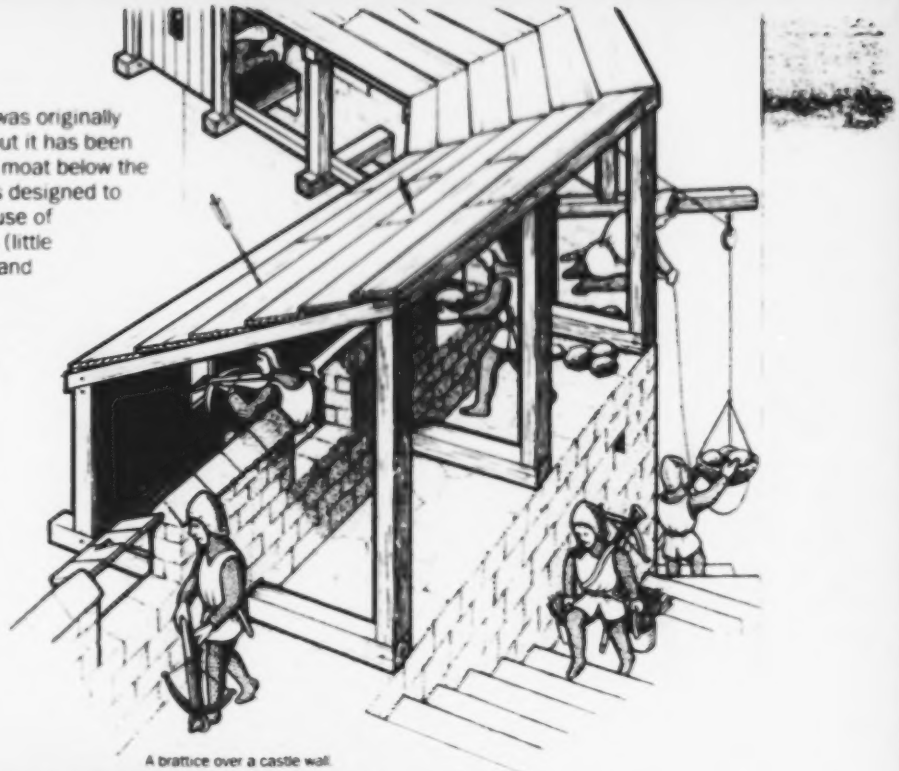
The curtain wall

Like the keep, the curtain wall round the bailey was originally built of limestone from Quarr in the early 1100s, but it has been repaired and altered since then. The bank and dry moat below the wall were important features of a castle which was designed to stand up to early medieval siege techniques: the use of scaling ladders, siege towers, battering rams, cats (little movable sheds to protect attackers) or tunnelling and rock-throwing equipment like mangonels.

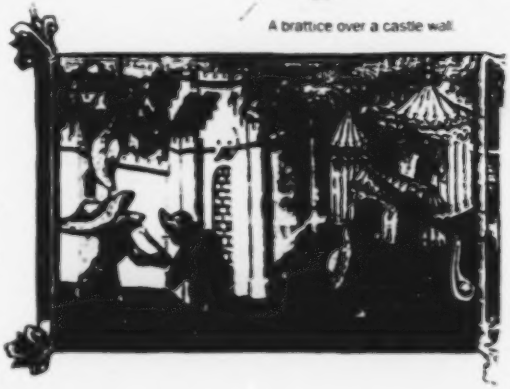
The wall would have been crenellated, with wooden shutters in the embrasures. Some of the crenellation can still be seen in places along the wall and also on top of the gatehouse. Here and there brattices were added to the wall. These were wooden structures built over it and jutting out to give defenders protection and a better position from which to counter an assault. They were supported on corbels built into the wall. Surviving corbels can be seen at the top of the flight of steps which leads to the wall walk nearest to the castle entrance (the north-west corner). The walls were pierced with loopholes for crossbows. Unfortunately, only a few of these loopholes survive.

Towers along the walls gave more protection, enabling the defenders to command the front of the curtain walls and the wall walk if the latter were captured. Evidence for their existence survives in several places. For example, the remains of a fourteenth-century tower can be seen where the east wall joins the motte, and the remains of twelfth-century towers at two of the corners. These corner towers were enlarged into bastions for cannon, probably at the time of the Armada.

Below the bottom of the keep steps, where the north curtain wall joins the motte, the castle's builders provided a postern gate as a second entrance and exit. The shape of its Norman round arch can be clearly seen from the outside. The other opening in the curtain wall, a doorway leading to the bowling green, was made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to give access to the outer fortifications which were being added to the castle at that time.

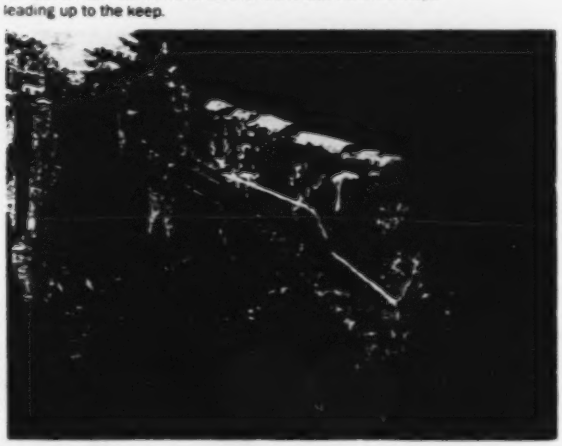


A brattice over a castle wall.



An assault in the fourteenth century. The attackers are using crossbows, a trebuchet and an early cannon.

The curtain wall on the north side of the castle from the steps leading up to the keep.



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The living accommodation

Within the courtyard, or bailey, enclosed by the curtain wall, are the buildings which have housed the Island's lords, captains and governors, and their officials and retainers, from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries. The buildings which are still intact have been lived in more or less continuously, and have been repaired and altered a great deal over the centuries. Part of this range of buildings is open to the public.

The castle's great hall, now housing displays, was originally a high single-storey building open to the rafters, used for eating and as sleeping space for retainers and servants. The high table, for the lord and his family, would have been on a platform at the end of the hall furthest from the entrance. A window from the twelfth-century building can still be seen, to the right of the fireplace. (It was blocked off when the fireplace was added in the fourteenth century but was rediscovered during restoration work in the last century.) In the far

The entrance to the lobby of the great hall drawn from observation.

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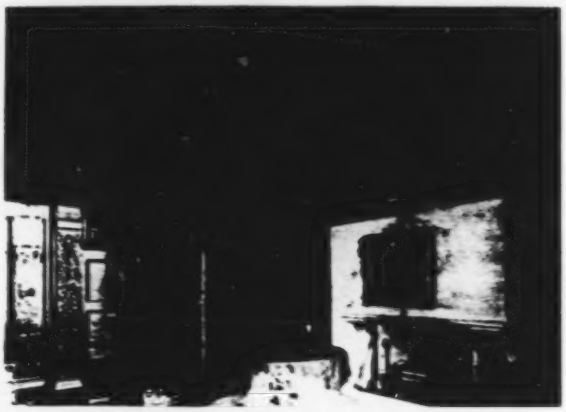
corner of the hall is the bottom of a stone stairway which used to lead to the next-door range of rooms occupied by the castle's constable. During the reign of Elizabeth, George Carey had the upper floor put in to make extra space. Princess Beatrice was the last governor to live in the great hall: she used the ground floor as a sitting room and part of the upper floor as her bedroom.

The present staircase was inserted about 1690. It was built through a room which was originally a chapel, dedicated to St Peter by Countess Isabella de Fortibus in the late thirteenth century. The chapel was intended for her private use and was conveniently next door to her great hall. The damaged remains of Early English arcading, windows and pillars survive at the side of the staircase. Beneath the window-seat, a small piece of the original east window is visible on each side. In the wall on the right, there is a tiny rectangular squint hidden by the upper flight of the staircase. This squint was made so that people in the next room (the constable's chamber) could follow the service in the chapel; it was set at an angle in the wall to give a view of the altar and the officiating priest. The squint is difficult to see: you will need to peer between the chapel wall and the woodwork of the staircase.

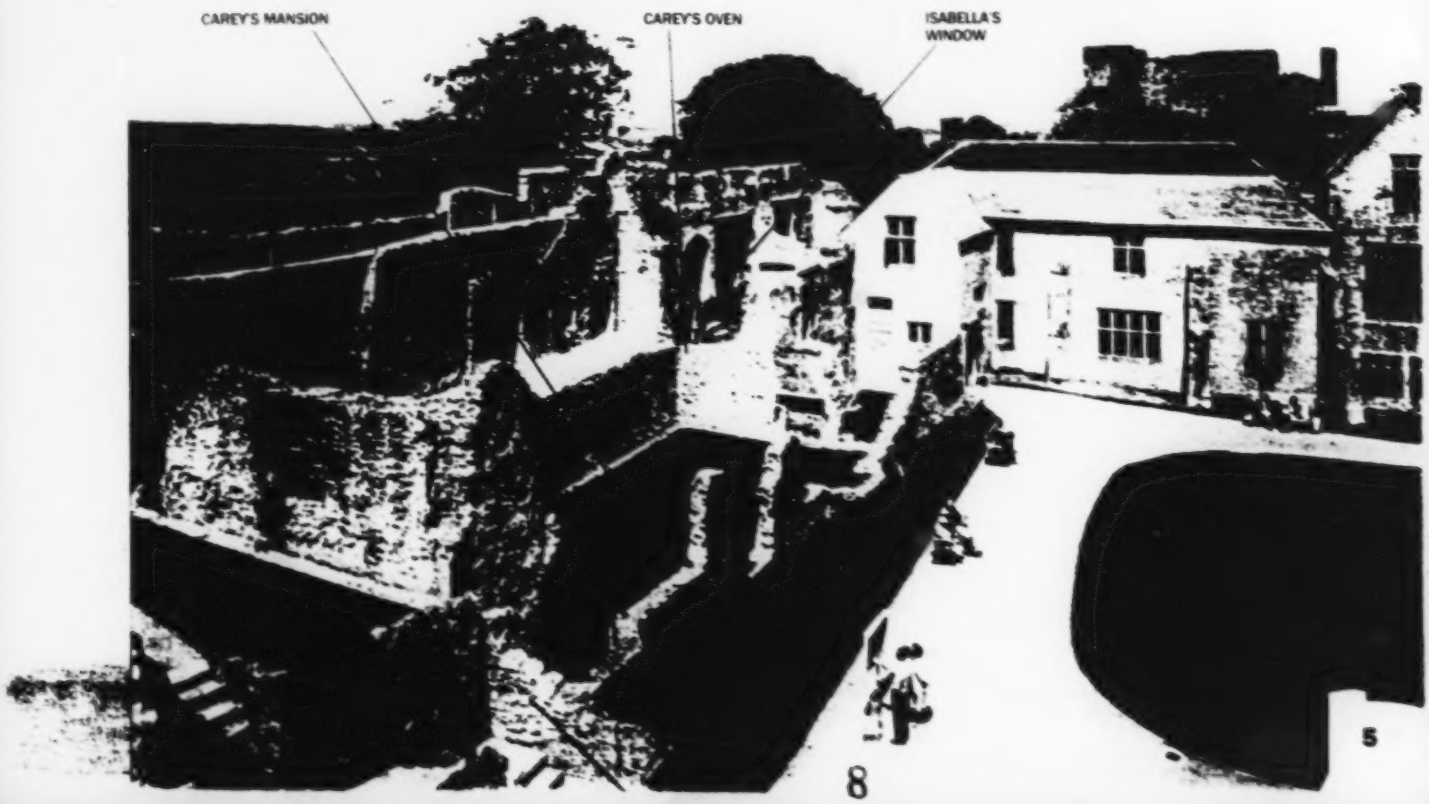


Carisbrooke Castle Museum

The constable's chamber when in use by Princess Beatrice as her dining room. The walls are still decorated with the heads of stags and African deer.

This range of buildings should also be looked at from the courtyard outside. Although the buildings themselves are medieval, the windows are Victorian or later. The most interesting is the biggest – the mock-gothic window of the room known as the constable's chamber, which was almost certainly Charles I's first prison bedroom when he was a prisoner at the castle. At that time, the window was much smaller, with a bar, and the King got stuck when he tried to escape through it.

The castle's living accommodation. The great hall and buildings to the south of it have been kept habitable. The buildings along the north wall fell into ruin in the late seventeenth century.



The ruined buildings

Along the north wall of the castle you can see remains of more of the castle's living accommodation. There were buildings along this wall in the Middle Ages, but they were replaced or altered by the castle's Elizabethan captain, George Carey, and then fell into ruin a century later through neglect.

The building nearest to the gatehouse is often known as the 'officers' quarters' because it was used as such during the Civil War. It was built by Carey and was something like a two-storey house with a central door and south-facing windows, brick fireplaces, and a staircase leading to the upper floor and long gallery. Carey would have used this building when entertaining the local gentry.

The next room was Carey's kitchen, conveniently placed between his new building and the old medieval great hall which was also in use. The brick ovens of

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A middle school group examining the evidence for an upper storey in the ruins of Carey's mansion.

Carey's kitchen survive and there is a serving hatch in the opposite wall so that food could be passed from the kitchen to the lobby of the great hall. For his kitchen, Carey used the site of a room built in the thirteenth century by Countess Isabella de Fortibus. A window of Isabella's room still exists, with its window-seat and steps, and there is evidence of another similar window next to it. Sitting in her window-seat, Isabella could enjoy the view across the valley to the village of Carisbrooke and make full use of the daylight. Castle accounts show that she actually had glass in the window, an unusual luxury but one she could well afford.

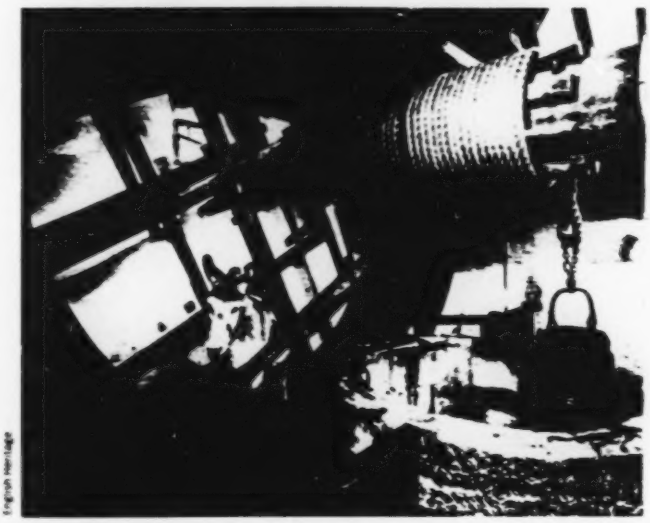
Next to Isabella's room is a building which has associations with Charles I. The upper storey was the King's second bedroom. He was moved to it when his gaoler discovered that he had tried to escape through the window of his first bedroom overlooking the courtyard.

The well house

The well house, with its donkey wheel, is one of the most famous attractions of the castle. The well itself is medieval, but the well house and wheel were built by Carey in 1587, replacing earlier ones from at least as far back as 1291.

The well is about 49 metres deep. The shaft is lined with masonry for only about 5 metres; below that it is simply cut through the solid chalk of the hill. The depth of water in it varies but is generally about 12 metres. The supply did dry up occasionally, for example in 1898 and 1899, and it was because of this problem that the castle was connected to the mains in 1904.

The treadwheel is 4.7 metres in diameter and 14.8 metres in circumference, and is made of oak. Originally the wheel was probably worked by prisoners, if there



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The well house with the donkey in the treadwheel.

happened to be any, or servants. Donkeys have been used at least as far back as the late seventeenth century and probably earlier. Traditionally, castle donkeys have been given names beginning with J, although there have been exceptions. As far as is known, the castle's longest-lived donkey was Joseph who was 49 when he died in 1898.

The square stone building has an old doorway in one wall, now blocked up; this was probably the original entrance. The tiled roof is topped with a gilded weather-vane which includes Princess Beatrice's monogram in its design.

Chapel of St Nicholas

The present chapel is the third Chapel of St Nicholas in Castro. The first one had been built by 1086, for it is mentioned in Domesday Book. In 1738 it was replaced by a brick building which had fallen into ruin by the end of the last century. In 1904 a new chapel was built , as a memorial to Charles I, paid for by contributions from the public. Inside the building is a reproduction of Bernini's bust of the King. Since then, the chapel has also become the Island's war memorial.

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The dates of successive Chapels of St. Nicholas recorded below the east window of the present building

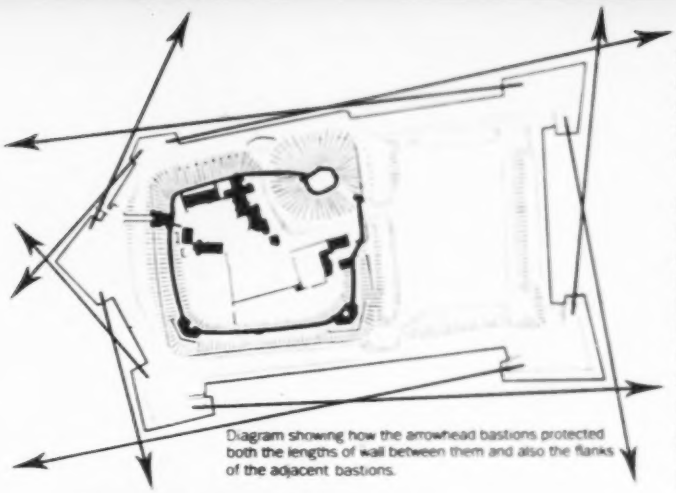

Diagram showing how the arrowhead bastions protected both the lengths of wall between them and also the flanks of the adjacent bastions.

minor changes had been needed to cope with the development of weapons. At the end of the sixteenth century, however, more drastic changes were necessary to make this castle into an efficient artillery fortress capable of resisting an attack by Spain.

The man responsible for these improvements was George Carey, Captain of the Island from 1583. He had repaired the medieval castle before the Armada in 1588, and then in the 1590s decided on a complete refortification because English spies were reporting that Philip of Spain was planning a second Armada with the Island as a possible invasion target. The new fortification was designed by Gianibelli, a famous Italian military engineer, and was built between 1597 and 1602. The new walls were backed with earth ramparts and were strong enough to stand up to a bombardment from guns. They were also protected from attempts to storm them, by five arrowhead bastions, equipped with cannon mounted in two storeys which could fire along the stretches of wall between them. The loopholes which can be seen in the bastions are eighteenth-century, not Elizabethan. The refortification of the castle cost well over £4,000, but the Spanish never succeeded in launching their second Armada and the castle was not attacked again.

The bowling green and outer fortifications

Outside the medieval curtain wall on the side of the castle opposite the gatehouse lies a flat area which was possibly used for tournaments in the Middle Ages. When the new fortifications were added to the castle in Elizabeth's reign, the area was enclosed within the new wall. In the summer of 1648, when Charles I was a prisoner at the castle, Colonel Hammond, his gaoler, had the area made into a bowling green (even providing a kind of summer-house at one end for shelter) in an effort to cheer the King when he was depressed. King and gaoler used to play bowls here on fine afternoons. It was here, two years later, that Charles's daughter Elizabeth was caught in a summer shower that led to her death from a chill at the age of fourteen.

The Elizabethan fortifications, nearly a mile in perimeter, were built to bring the castle up to date. During the Middle Ages, only

Sir George Carey: miniature by Nicholas Hilliard.

Berkeley Castle

Events in the Castle's History

1066 William the Conqueror grants the Isle of Wight to William FitzOsbern.

1086 The castle is mentioned in Domesday Book.

1100 The Island is granted to Richard de Redvers. De Redvers soon improves his castle, enlarging it to the present motte and bailey.

1136 Baldwin de Redvers surrenders the castle to King Stephen because the well runs dry.

1262 Countess Isabella de Fortibus inherits the castle from her brother. She puts up new buildings and repairs old ones.

1293 Isabella, the last member of the de Redvers family, sells the Island, including the castle, to Edward I for £4,000.

1377 The castle is unsuccessfully besieged by the French.

1583 Sir George Carey is appointed Captain of the Island. He has the castle surveyed, begins new building work to make the castle habitable and undertakes repairs to the defences.

1588 The Spanish Armada is defeated.

1597 Gianibelli begins building the outer fortifications.

1647-8 The castle is a prison for Charles I.

1650 Princess Elizabeth dies at the castle.

1856 Some of the castle buildings are restored.

1904 A new chapel of St Nicholas is built to commemorate Charles I.

Educational Approaches

This section suggests five possible educational approaches to Carisbrooke Castle and attempts to show how a visit can be related to work at school. Decide why you are coming and whether you want your pupils to learn information, practise skills or understand concepts. You may wish to cover more than one of these. Ideas for preparation and follow-up are included from which you can pick and choose according to your aims.

If you are coming to the Isle of Wight on a school journey you will also need to think about how this site links with the others you will be visiting during your stay. You may wish to develop a theme such as 'The Sea' or 'Homes' or you may want to ask your pupils to make an assessment of the tourist facilities on the Island. Again this will depend on your curriculum aims back at school.

Clues

This approach looks at the castle from the point of view of historical evidence. It involves children in observing, recording and interpreting evidence, at the same time introducing the idea that historical evidence has limitations and may be open to different interpretations.

Preparation

1. Choose some activities which introduce and develop the idea of evidence. Here are some suggestions:

   • Find some magazine pictures of, say, animals. Cut parts of the pictures away but leave some recognisable features. Ask the children to identify the animals from the clues they have.

   • Collect together boxes of objects which could have come from people's pockets. For example, one box could contain a school bus pass, a packet of Polos, some conkers and an oil-stained handkerchief, and another could contain a library ticket, a book of stamps, a till receipt, a shopping list and an advertisement for a baby buggy cut from a newspaper. Tell the children that each box contains clues about someone and that they are to find out as much as possible about the person from studying the evidence.

   • Show the children some partially made jigsaw puzzles. Ask them to draw what they think the completed picture will look like. Where a jigsaw is almost complete, children will more or less agree on the completed picture. The object of this activity is to show the children that there may be many equally valid interpretations of limited evidence.

2. Do some work on castles in general – enough to make them familiar with the function and main features of a castle, but not so much that their discovery and interpretation of clues during the visit are pre-empted.

At the site

A study of evidence on site involves observing and recording features, and then asking questions and interpreting them. The worksheets on pages 11, 12 and 13, which may be photocopied, are intended to direct observation and to help with recording and asking questions of the evidence. Obviously, they are a tool, a means to an end, and children's observations and interpretations should not be restricted to the material on the sheet.

Evidence in the former Chapel of St. Nicholas: the arcading and the remains of the original east window

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Drawing on site is a useful activity for recording evidence, as it involves careful observation. Give the children an outline of the gatehouse (see worksheet) and ask them to fill in the details as accurately as possible. They will probably notice that some of the rough rectangular openings were once cross-shaped loopholes. They should also notice the shapes of the two different kinds of loopholes and may be able to draw conclusions about how the gatehouse was defended.

The ruins to the left of the castle entrance are particularly useful for evidence work, with their clues to what the buildings looked like and what they were used for. The large shell of a building (put up by George Carey in the 1580s) may be measured by pacing it, and children can work out from the evidence where the entrance and the windows were. Ask the children to draw one end of the building, to show the two fireplaces and the sockets for the floor joists. The evidence is then recorded for later discussion. Find and draw the ovens in another part of the ruins – evidence that the room was once a kitchen. Look at the window in this room. Discuss its unusual feature with the children. What does this suggest the room was used for, before it became a kitchen?

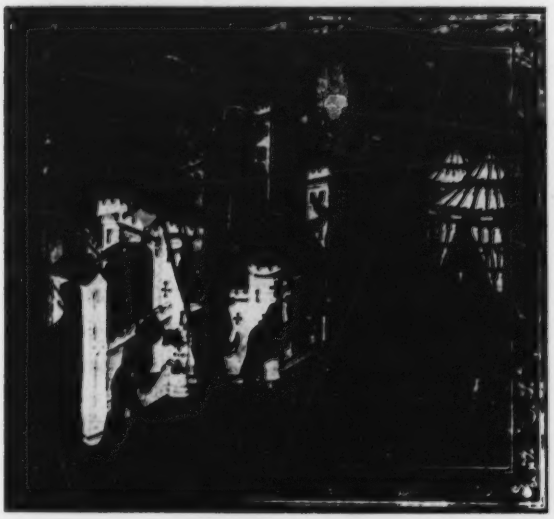
A middle school group measuring and recording the height of steps leading to the keep. Information about the steps could be used for calculations on the height and gradient of the motte.

Follow-up activities

1. Prepare a chart showing the clues that have been recorded, and interpretations of them. Make three columns like this:

Clue	What the clue tells us	Things we are not sure about
Loopholes for crossbows	the castle was defended with crossbows	The top of the gatehouse may have been added later, because guns are newer weapons than crossbows.
Loopholes for guns (These are only at the top of the gatehouse)	the castle had guns	

2. Think about other kinds of evidence for castles. Look for example at pictures from the Bayeux Tapestry and at medieval manuscript illustrations. The Bayeux Tapestry shows mottes, or mounds, with timber keeps. Pictures from manuscripts, often reproduced in books, may show sieges in progress. Make a frieze of a length of castle wall under siege. Base it on the evidence collected during the visit and evidence from other sources.



An assault using scaling ladders from a fourteenth-century manuscript.

Bodleian Library

3. Read to the class, or reproduce for them, this piece of documentary evidence, which comes from the accounts of Countess Isabella de Fortibus who lived at the castle from 1262 to 1293. Ask them which window they think it refers to. What information does it add to the evidence we already have?

Account of William Gerveis overseer of the Castle from the morrow of St Michael 20 Edward I to the same day 21 Edward I.
For 16 pieces of glass for the windows of the Countess.
For lead solder and nails for the ironwork of the said windows.
Wages of two men mending the said windows for 5 weeks.

A Thirteenth-Century Head-dress

Countess Isabella de Fortibus who lived at the castle from 1262 to 1293: a corbel in the Priory Church, Christchurch, Dorset.

A corbel in Christchurch Priory is yet another source of evidence. It shows us what Isabella de Fortibus may have looked like.

To make a head-dress:

First, part the hair in the middle and coil or plait it over or just behind the ears, to form a projecting 'boss' on each side of the face. For the **wimple**, drape a square of yellow or white material round the chin and round the bosses of hair, and fasten the ends on top of the head. The lower edge may be tucked into the back of the dress. For the **fillet**, stiffen a strip of white material by sticking it to a paper backing. Fasten it across the forehead and around the head. Finish the head-dress with a veil by draping a rectangle of white or yellow material over the top of the head.

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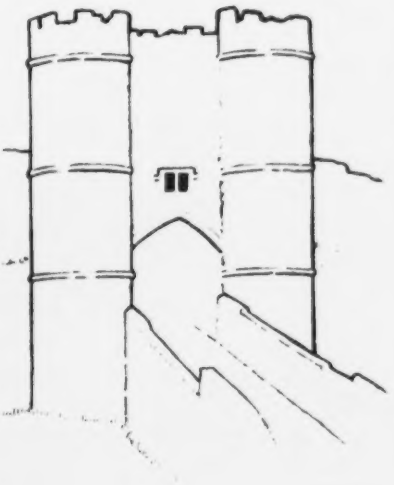
Castle Clues

A building like Carisbrooke Castle contains clues about its past. Use this worksheet to help you look for clues and think about what they tell us.



The gatehouse

Complete this picture of the gatehouse. ▷

What weapons did the defenders use?

What do you think the holes jutting out over the gateway were used for?

Was the gateway defended by portcullises?

How can you tell?

The motte and keep

Work out roughly how high the motte is. (You could do this by counting the number of steps and measuring the height of an average step. Then you could multiply the two.)

List all the evidence that shows the keep would be difficult to capture

What evidence can you find in the keep to show that people could have lived here if necessary?

The walls

What clues are there that show how the walls were defended?

What weapon were the loopholes designed for?

Record the height and thickness of the walls in various places.

Do you think it would be easy or difficult to make an assault on the wall using medieval siege weapons? Why?

Castle Clues

Where people lived

The lord of the Isle of Wight and his retainers and servants lived in buildings inside the castle walls. Some of these buildings are still standing.
The great hall now houses displays. In the Middle Ages it was used for eating and sleeping space for servants. It did not have an upper floor.

Pace the room to find out how big it is _____

Find the fireplace. How can you tell it was added after the great hall was built? _____

_____

Where do you think the original fireplace would have been? _____

Find the remains of the stone stairway which used to lead to the next room. How far from the floor is the bottom step? What might this tell us about the original floor level? _____

_____

_____

The staircase to the museum's upper floor has been built through a room which used to be a chapel. We know from evidence in documents that it was built by Countess Isabella de Fortibus who lived at the castle in the late 1200s.

Draw the shape of the arches you can see on the left of the staircase. ▷

Go outside.

Some of the buildings where people lived are ruined now. Climb the steps you can see on your left as you enter the castle. Turn right halfway up, into the ruined range of buildings.

The first building contains lots of clues to what it was like before it became ruined.

Work out where the doorway was and where the windows were. What sort of windows were they? _____

_____

Do you think they were big or small? _____

Did the building have an upper floor? _____

How can you tell? _____

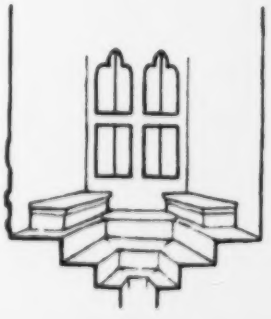
Castle Clues

Record the evidence of the upper floor by sketching one end of the building. ▽

What was the next room used for?

How can you tell?

Record the evidence by drawing it. ▷



The room wasn't always used in this way. Look at the original medieval window. What is unusual about it?

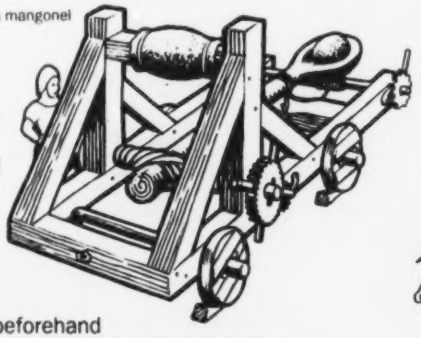
◁ Finish the picture by drawing the shape of the arch.

Where have you already seen an arch this shape?

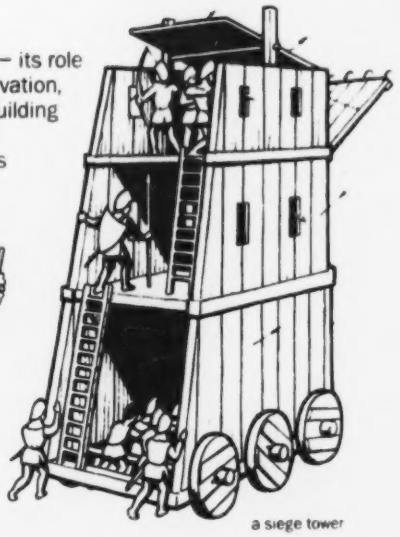
This is a clue to when this room was built and who built it.

Spies

This approach focuses on the most obvious of the themes the castle lends itself to – its role in medieval warfare. The on-site activity gives an opportunity to practise skills of observation, measuring, calculating, drawing and making deductions from evidence. Study of the building will show how it was designed to stand up to medieval siege techniques, and will also introduce concepts connected with castles and defence. The element of role-play gives purpose to the activity.



a mangonel



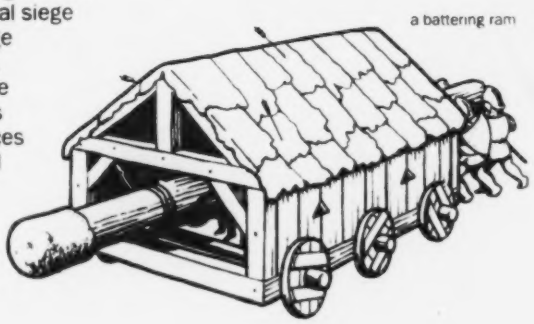
a siege tower

Preparation

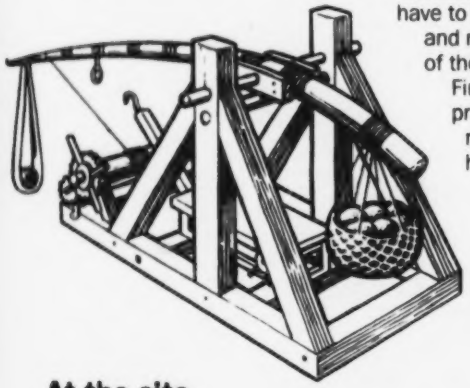
The children are told that they are a group of spies. They are being sent on a mission, disguised as travelling entertainers, to penetrate an enemy-held castle in order to make a surreptitious investigation of its defences. The commission, from a fictitious baron, could be presented on 'antiqued' paper with an official seal.

The spies will need to be well briefed beforehand by their leader (you) who should familiarise them with different types of castles, the parts of castles, and the features they may expect to find, using correct vocabulary. It is important to avoid telling the spies anything about Carisbrooke in particular: leader and spies must remain in ignorance until they arrive. The children will also need to know about medieval siege techniques and weapons: the use of battering rams, ladders, siege towers, cats and mantelets (screens), mangonels and trebuchets, longbows, crossbows and early fire-arms. After all, in order to make relevant observations, the spies have to know about the resources and methods at the disposal of their commander.

Finally, discuss and practise unostentatious methods of estimating heights and distances.



a battering ram



a trebuchet

At the site

The children are reminded that they are spies, that they should not draw attention to their activities and that they must occupy the time before their evening performance finding out as much as possible about the castle.

Look around the castle briefly so that children can get their bearings and identify the main features of the castle: the keep on its motte, the gatehouse, the curtain wall, the living accommodation. Now divide the children into three groups and give them their instructions to investigate different aspects of the castle's defences. (See pages 17, 18 and 19 for sheets which may be photocopied.) Remind the spies that they must appear casual as they make their observations, pace distances, estimate heights and do sketches.

'Spies' count the steps up the motte to give the enemy some idea of its height.

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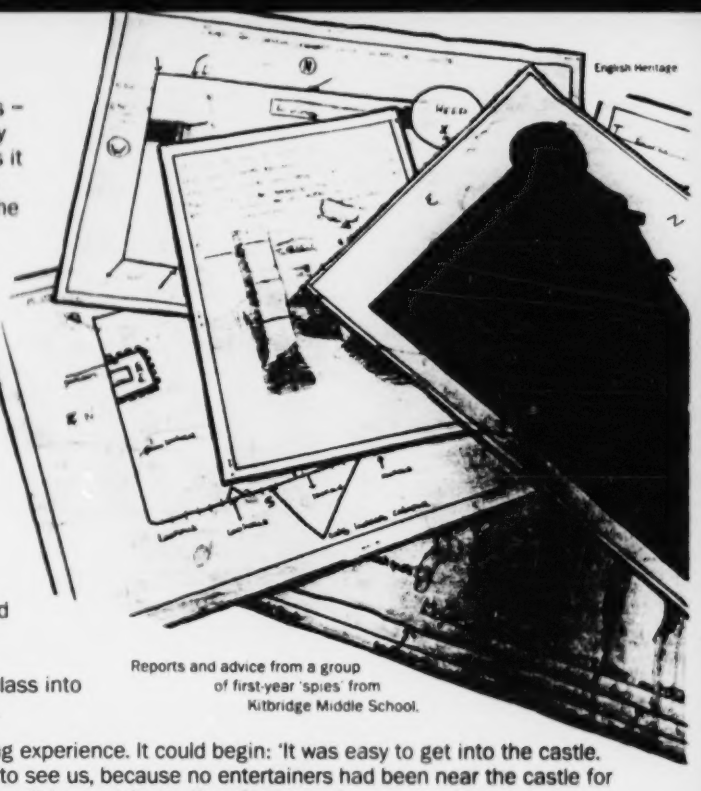
The main difficulty with this approach lies in the changes which have taken place since the Middle Ages – modifications to the buildings and defences, and decay over the centuries. One solution is to take the castle as it stands (apart from the Elizabethan fortifications which can be ignored without too much difficulty) and allow the children to record and assess a rather dilapidated castle. Provided teachers direct attention to relevant medieval features, the occasional intrusion of more recent elements does not pose too many problems. An alternative way round the difficulty needs a bit more sophistication. Children use the knowledge they have gained from their preparatory work to imagine what the castle looked like in the later Middle Ages, with its crenellated walls, pierced with loopholes, strengthened with towers and overhung with brattices.



Reports and advice from a group of first-year 'spies' from Kitbridge Middle School.

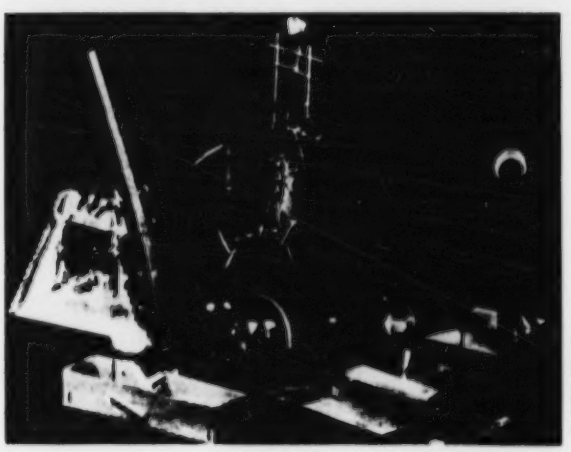
Follow-up

1. The most direct and obvious follow-up is the preparation of a report for the baron who commissioned it. Each group should produce annotated plans, diagrams and drawings to show the castle's strengths and weaknesses. Once all the reports have been assembled, displayed and discussed, divide the class into smaller groups to devise plans for capturing the castle.

2. Ask the children to write a story based on their spying experience. It could begin: 'It was easy to get into the castle. Nobody seemed suspicious. In fact, they were pleased to see us, because no entertainers had been near the castle for months. Our performance wasn't until the evening, so we did our spying in the afternoon....'

3. Make models of siege weapons. Provide the children with junk materials and let them design and construct their own versions of siege equipment. There is likely to be a good proportion of rock-throwing inventions. Collect them together and conduct trials to find out which is the most effective.

Medieval siege weapons illustrate two principles of propulsion – the torsion principle and the counterweight. The mangonel worked on the torsion principle and was powered by twisted rope or sinews. The essential element of the trebuchet was a pivoted arm with a counterweight at one end and a sling to contain the rock at the other. Check the children's siege weapons for examples of these two methods of propulsion. A class of children will generally produce examples of torsion-propelled mangonels, using elastic bands, but the counterweight principle of the trebuchet seems more difficult to improvise, so instructions for making one from junk materials are given.

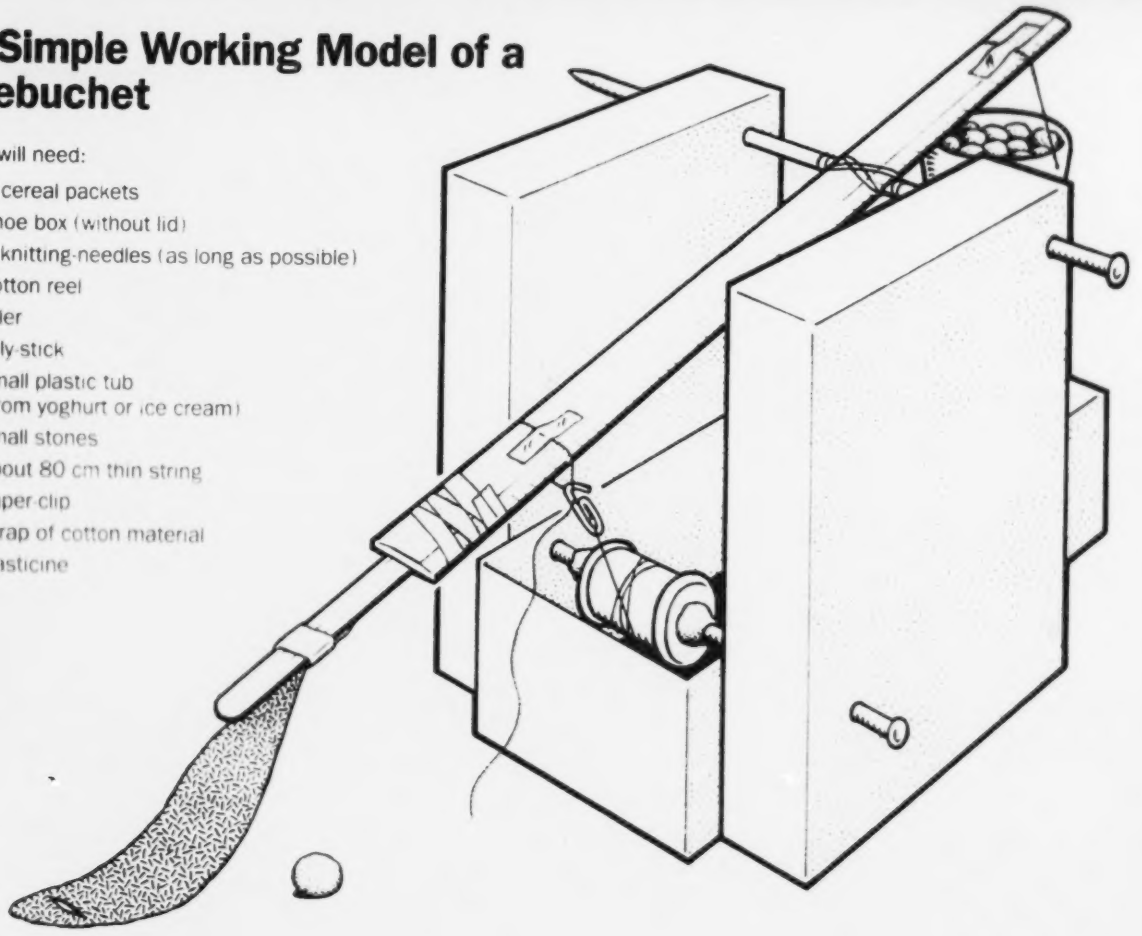


Siege engines designed by third-year pupils at Nodehill Middle School as a C.D.T. project.

4. Do experiments with a trebuchet, using one of the children's models or one made as suggested. Try it out using different sized lumps of Plasticine as missiles. Each time, record the weight of the missile and the distance it travelled. Repeat the experiment keeping the weight of the missile constant but varying the weight of the counterweight.

Discuss what adjustment you would make if the rock from your trebuchet fell short of the castle wall. What would you do if it went too high – and too far?

A Simple Working Model of a Trebuchet



You will need:

- 2 cereal packets
- shoe box (without lid)
- 2 knitting-needles (as long as possible)
- cotton reel
- ruler
- lolly-stick
- small plastic tub (from yoghurt or ice cream)
- small stones
- about 80 cm thin string
- paper-clip
- scrap of cotton material
- Plasticine

How to make the trebuchet

a Glue or tape the cereal packets at one end of the shoe box, one on each side.

b Push a knitting-needle through the two cereal packets,in the position shown on the diagram.

c Push the other knitting-needle through one of the cereal packets and one side of the shoe box. Thread a cotton reel on to the knitting-needle and then push the knitting-needle through the opposite side of the shoe box and the other cereal packet. Fix the cotton reel in place on the knitting-needle with a lump of Plasticine.

d Tape the lolly-stick to one end of the ruler.

e Cut an oval shape about 10 cm long from the cotton material. Cut a small slit at one end and tape the other end to the lolly-stick.

f Pierce holes near the rim of the plastic tub. Make a handle from a small piece of string and tape the bucket to the end of the ruler.

g Tape a small piece of string to the ruler, to form a loop about 4 cm from the lolly-stick.

h Tape or tie the ruler to the first knitting-needle, about 10 cm from the bucket end. Adjust as necessary so that the bucket can swing freely.

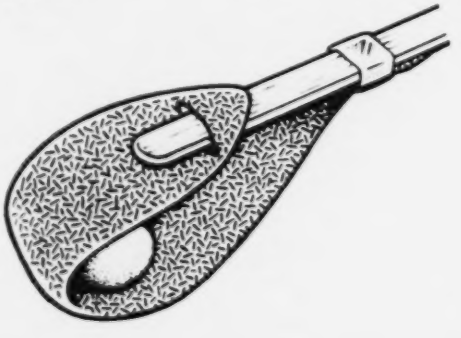
i Bend the paper clip into a hook and tie a short piece of string to it as shown.

j Take a 40 cm length of string. Tape one end to the cotton reel and tie the paper-clip hook to the other end.

k Put stones in the bucket to weight it.

To operate the trebuchet

Put the hook in the loop on the ruler. Turn the cotton reel to wind the ruler down, until it is just below a horizontal position. Put a Plasticine 'rock' in the sling. Pull out the hook.



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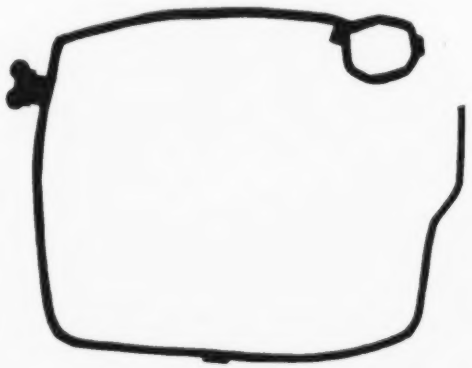
Spies I

Do not lose these instructions: they may fall into the wrong hands. Consult them only when you are unobserved.

Your task is to find out as much as possible about the size of the castle and the strengths and weaknesses of the castle walls.

1. Walk along the walls. Count the number of paces you take for each stretch of wall. Count silently and pretend you are admiring the view. Write the numbers on a sketch plan.



2. At various points, estimate the height of the wall and mark your findings on the sketch plan. Be careful not to arouse suspicions. One of your group could stand against the wall while the rest of you use his height to help you make an estimate of the height of the wall.

3. Estimate the thickness of the wall in various places and record your findings.

4. Look for any towers around the walls and mark them on the sketch plan.

5. Is there a moat? How deep is it? Is there any water in it? Would we be able to get scaling ladders, siege towers, rams or cats up to the wall?

Spies II

Do not lose these instructions: they may fall into the wrong hands. Consult them only when you are unobserved.

Your task is to find out as much as possible about the keep and the living accommodation.

1. *Is the keep on a motte?*
If so, how high is it?
Would it be easy to climb?
Do you think the keep would be harder to attack than the rest of the castle?

2. *What is the entrance to the keep like?*
Would it be easy to defend?

3. *Find out how big the keep is. Walk round the top of the wall counting paces as you go. Count silently. Stop at times and pretend to admire the view in order to avoid arousing suspicions.*

4. *Is there anything interesting in the keep that we should know about?*

5. *Look at the living accommodation in the courtyard. Draw a sketch plan on the back of this parchment and mark its position; rough squares and rectangles should be enough to show where the buildings are.*

6. *Do you think it would be possible to damage the living accommodation from outside?*
If we get into the courtyard, will the castle inhabitants be able to defend themselves in their great hall or in any other building?

7. *Find out about the castle's water supply. Are there any wells?*
If so where are they?
Do they have good pure water? *Do you think we could cut off the water supply easily or poison it?*

Spies III

Do not lose these instructions; they may fall into the wrong hands. Consult them only when you are unobserved.

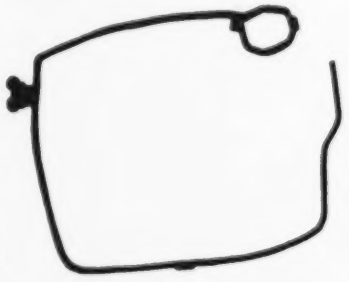
Your task is to find out which would be the easiest direction from which to approach the castle and whether the entrances could be attacked.

1. Is the castle on high ground?
Is it possible for our men to get close to the castle without being seen?

2. Which direction would you advise us to approach from?

3. Sketches to show what can be seen from the castle walls in each direction would be helpful. Can you see the mainland, any river valleys, hills or forests.? Use the back of this parchment if necessary.

4. Walk casually round the castle looking for entrances. When nobody is watching you, mark their positions on a sketch plan.



5. Provided you are unobserved, do some sketches to show what the entrances are like from the outside. Make a special note of anything which would make them hard to attack. Are there portcullises, machicolations, towers, loopholes, or anything else? Estimate the width of each entrance and record it.

The King, the Servant and the Gaoler

Story and narrative, about real people and real places, are important elements of history. This theme introduces children to a good story – a story of conflicts and loyalties, different personalities and their influence on what happened, a story in which the characters held different points of view with sincerity, and issues were not always black and white. Study of the site where the events took place emphasises that the story is true not fiction. The concept of evidence is also included, although for this theme the use of evidence is secondary to the story approach: it would not be possible for children to reconstruct the narrative from evidence, but evidence may supplement, illustrate, clarify and enliven the narrative. The use of a story approach in conjunction with a visit to the site gives scope for imaginative work that is disciplined by some of the realities of the situation.

The castle's living accommodation, showing the windows before their remodelling in 1856, from an engraving by Livesay in 1798.

Preparation

Younger children can enjoy the story of an imprisoned king, frustrated in his attempts to escape, without having to enter into the complexities of the issues of the Civil War. With young children, you could try telling the story from Firebrace's point of view: at least for Firebrace it had a reasonably happy ending.

With older pupils, your use of this story may be part of a topic on the Civil War, and they may be able to appreciate the basic issue involved: that Charles I believed he ruled by Divine Right, answerable to God alone and no human being, and that Parliament felt it should have some say in deciding policy – especially over taxation and how the money was spent, control of the Army, and church government. Adapt the following story of the King at Carisbrooke for your class:

Charles I and Colonel Hammond, the castle's Parliamentarian governor, from the title page of a contemporary pamphlet.

In the evening of 11 November 1647, Charles I escaped down the back stairs of Hampton Court, where he had been imprisoned after losing the Civil War. He was afraid his enemies were going to kill him and he decided the Isle of Wight would be a safer refuge.

The Governor of the Isle of Wight was Colonel Robert Hammond. He lived at Carisbrooke Castle. He was related to Oliver Cromwell and had fought on the Roundhead side in the Civil War. He was horrified when he heard that the King was intending to take refuge at the castle, but there was nothing he could do except take on the duties of looking after the King.

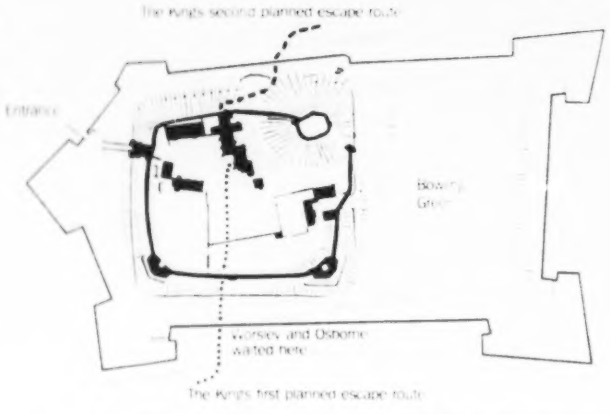
Although he had fought against him in the Civil War, Hammond still believed Charles should be treated as much like a king as possible. He gave him a bedroom overlooking the castle courtyard, and had furniture and carpets moved from Hampton Court. He arranged for the King to have twenty-course dinners every day (until they ran short of money and cut the dinners to sixteen courses). He let the King have visitors and allowed him to travel about the Island. Unfortunately for the King, this didn't last. His enemies found out that he had been secretly plotting with the Scots in the hope that the Scots would invade England and win his power back for him. So Hammond had to guard the King more closely. Charles had to stay inside the castle and guards were put on his bedroom doors. Before long, he was hoping for a chance to escape.

He must have been pleased when he found out that a new servant at the castle was willing to help him. Henry Firebrace had been on the side of Parliament at the beginning of the Civil War but had become a Royalist by now. Colonel Hammond didn't know he had changed sides, so Firebrace was able to plan the King's escape without making Hammond suspicious.

Firebrace managed to talk secretly to the King by doing guard duties in the evenings. He would go to the guard outside one of the bedroom doors and offer to take over his duty.

The guard would slip downstairs and have his supper, while Firebrace whispered to the King through a little hole in the wall hidden underneath a piece of tapestry.

Firebrace had noticed that the courtyard below the King's bedroom window wasn't guarded, so he suggested that the King should escape by climbing out of the window. He would provide a rope and then, in the night, the King would climb through the window and let himself down the rope to the courtyard. Firebrace would meet him there, and the two of them would creep to a part of the wall that was far away from the soldiers' quarters. Then Firebrace would lower the King down the wall with the King sitting on a piece of stick tied to a rope. After that, he would have to cope on his own with the steep bank, another wall and more banks and ditches, until he would find two more Royalists, Edward Worsley and Richard Osborne, waiting outside the castle in the darkness with horses to take the King to the coast. Here he would find another Royalist, Captain John Newland of Newport, with a boat.


The King's second planned escape route
Entrance
Bowling Green
Horses and Osborne waited here
The King's first planned escape route
Plan of the castle showing the escape routes the King probably intended to use

This was the plan, and Firebrace prepared everything for the night of 20 March. As the date drew closer, Charles I would have looked carefully at the escape route as he walked round the castle walls each morning taking his exercise.

There was one problem that was worrying Firebrace – the width of the window. 'I told him I fancied it was too narrow,' Firebrace wrote afterwards. 'He said he had tried with his head and he was sure where that would pass the body would follow.' There was nothing Firebrace could do but wait and hope for the best. Late in the evening of 20 March, Firebrace checked the castle courtyard. As usual there were no guards near the King's window. He gave the signal – stones thrown up to the window, probably – and waited below it, peering up in the darkness. Then Firebrace heard a sound which made his heart sink – a groan; and he guessed at once what it meant. He had been right: the window was too small and the King had got stuck, 'between his breast and his shoulders, and not able to get forward or backward,' Firebrace wrote afterwards. As the servant waited in anxious silence, he saw the flame of a candle in the King's window. Charles was signalling that he had managed to get back into the room! Firebrace turned away and crossed the courtyard to the wall. Somehow he had to warn Worsley and Osborne that the plan had failed. He managed to do this by throwing stones over the wall until he heard them riding quietly away.

Soon, Cromwell's spies found out that the King had got stuck in the window. Cromwell wrote to Hammond to tell him, so the gaoler had to find somewhere safer for his prisoner. He chose a room with a barred window in the castle wall; on the bank below the window he put three guards.

The window of the King's second bedroom

Firebrace had already sent to London for files and nitric acid ready for the King to try again. The King loosened his window bar with acid and another escape plan was made, for the night of 28 May. The guards were bribed with £100 each, and friends were waiting with horses outside the castle and a boat on the coast.

Again the plan went wrong. That evening, two of the bribed guards betrayed the King, and that was his last chance. Hammond had already got suspicious of Firebrace and sacked him. With no one left to help him, the King stayed as a prisoner at the castle until September.

To finish the story, what happened to the three main characters – the King, his servant and his gaoler? The King was taken back to the mainland and executed in London in January; Firebrace was rewarded when Charles I's son became king as Charles II: he was made a Clerk of the Kitchen and then knighted in 1685; Colonel Hammond was criticised by the Royalists for being too strict with the King and criticised by his own side for being too kind: he was ordered to leave his post at the castle and return to Army headquarters.

At the site

Divide the class into three groups, each group to look at the castle from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. The information they gather and impressions they gain will be used in their follow-up activities.

English Heritage

The castle's south wall. This was Firebrace's proposed escape route, with the curtain wall, steep bank and Elizabethan wall to be negotiated in the dark.

Charles I Group

Think of the castle as a prison. Walk along the curtain wall (as the King did for exercise every morning). Does it seem an easy or difficult prison to escape from? Is there any obvious escape route?

Look at the escape route Firebrace has proposed and think about his plan. Would you manage to cope with it in the dark? At one time, there was a plan for the King to escape while he was playing bowls. Visit the bowling green, outside the castle's curtain wall. Would it be possible to slip away quietly during a game? What problems would there be? How much help would you need?

Firebrace Group

Imagine you have decided on your escape plan. You now have to convince the King that it is the best idea in the circumstances. Look round the castle and make notes explaining why it would be the best escape plan.

Next, write down as much information as possible about the route – heights and distances and all the hazards the King will have to cope with in the pitch dark. Examine the route from outside the castle. Estimate the height of the outer wall; count the banks and ditches; find the best place for Worsley and Osborne to hide with the horses; add sketches where they would be useful to the King.

Hammond Group

You have just received a letter from Cromwell telling you that your prisoner almost escaped from under your nose, but got stuck in his bedroom window. You have moved your prisoner to a new bedroom which will be better guarded. Do a survey of the new bedroom so that you can send a detailed report to Parliament. Make a rough plan to show whereabouts in the castle it is. Measure the room and draw a plan marking where the fireplace and window are. (Unfortunately, the floor and ceiling have gone so the children will have to interpret the evidence and use imagination.) Sketch the fireplace and window. Go outside the castle and sketch the relevant length of wall and bank, marking the King's window and the place where the sentries stood. Try to estimate the height of the window from the ground. Note all the obstacles which would make it difficult to escape in the dark.

English Heritage

How far from the ground is Charles I's window? Using a child of known height to help estimate.

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An interview with Colonel Hammond by Lucy Gillis (11).

Colonel Hammond

Reporter. What has been your most difficult situation during this affair?

Col Hammond My most difficult situation has been to be loyal to his regesty, and also to be loyal to my army.

Reporter I see. Do you have any sympathy for the King?

Col Hammond Yes, As a loyal subject I find it hard to turn against him but it is my job as Colonel to do so.

Reporter As governer of the Isle of Wight, what are your personal views on the King claiming to divine right?

Col Hammond Well, I am sympathetic to him of course, but I do think that many people are against his claims

Reporter Does the King have good facilities at Carisbrooke Castle?

Col Hammond Of course! Although he is a prisoner - to some extent - he is still a royal person!

Reporter Are you afraid that showing homage, favouritism or giving your attention to the King, might threaten your position as governor?

Col Hammond It might well do but I am still loyal to Charles

Follow-up

1. Compile documents based on what children know of the story and the information collected on site:

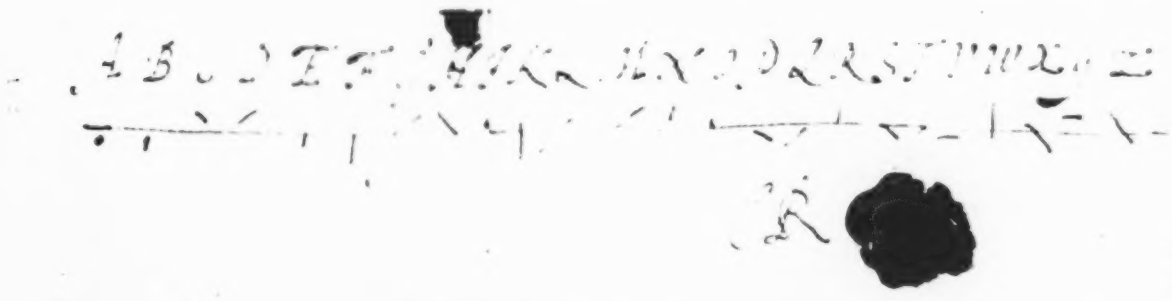
- a letter from Charles I to Henrietta Maria, his wife, telling her about his plight and his hopes of escape.
- a message from Firebrace to the King giving details of the escape route. A document to complete is given on page 25; the handwriting is reasonably authentic. Children might be asked to pace the route and record landmarks and obstacles that will cause difficulty in the dark. Can they find a better alternative route?
- a report from Hammond to Cromwell on the new security arrangements for the King, intended to reassure him that the King won't have another chance to escape.

2. Interview the King, Firebrace and Hammond about their reactions to the escape attempt.

3. During his imprisonment the King used a variety of codes and ciphers to communicate with his friends. Sometimes he substituted letters for names, such as J for the King himself, M for the Queen, D for Firebrace, Z for Edward Worsley and L for Richard Osborne.

In a collection of letters written to William Hopkins, a Royalist who lived in Newport, numbers are used instead, including 39 for the King, 40 for the Queen, and 50 for Hammond; in these letters Firebrace is referred to as 'David Griffin'. In the British Museum, the key to another code survives. This one involved substituting dashes in various positions for individual letters.

The children could write appropriate messages using this code, and also invent and try out their own codes and ciphers.



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Cipher used by Charles I.

Seventeenth-Century Cooking

Try making and eating some cracknels – biscuits which could well have been familiar to the King. The recipe comes from a collection of his wife's recipes and remedies, published in 1662 in a book called *The Queen's Closet Opened.*

'To make cracknels

'Take half a pound of fine flower, dryed and searched, as much fine sugar search, mingled with a spoonfull of Coriander–seed bruised, half a quarter of a pound of butter rubbed in the flower and sugar, then wet it with the yolks of two eggs, and half a spoonful of white Rosewater, a spoonful or little more of Cream as will wet it; knead the past till it be soft and limber to rowle well, then rowle it extream thin, and cut them round by little plates; lay them up on buttered papers, and when they goe into the oven, prick them, and wash the top with the yolk of an egge beaten, and made thin with Rosewater or faire water; they will give with keeping, therefore, before they are eaten, they must be dryed in a warm oven to make them crisp.'

Another recipe in the book has associations with Charles I's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, who was imprisoned at Carisbrooke in 1650 and died there.

'To make a Cake the way of the Royal Princess, the Lady Elizabeth, daughter to King Charles the first.

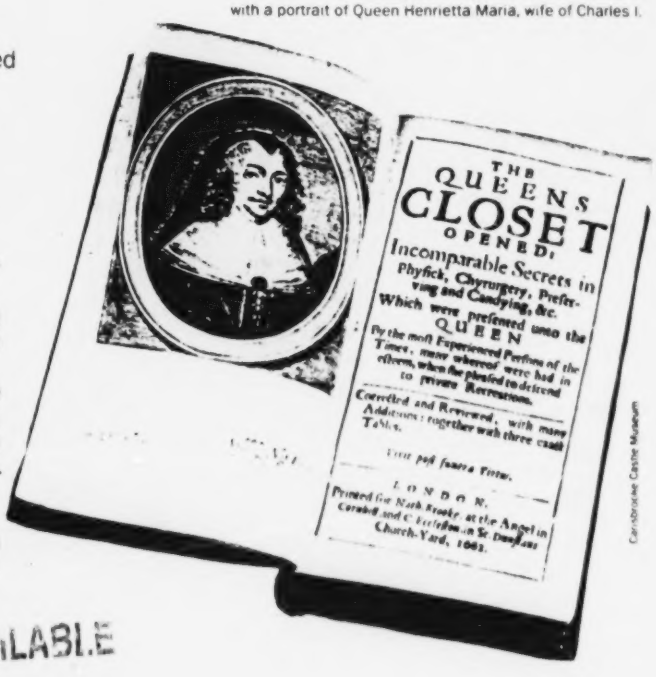
'Take half a peck of flower, half a pint of Rosewater, a pint of Ale–yeast, a pint of Cream, boil it, a pound and half of butter, six Eggs, (leave out the whites), four pound of Currants, one half pound of Sugar, one Nutmeg, and a little salt, work it very well, and let it stand half–an–hour by the fire, and then work it again, and then make it up, and let it stand an hour and a half in the oven; let not your oven be too hot.'

This is a recent adaptation of the recipe.

225 g plain flour	1 egg
25 ml rose-water	100 g currants
15 g yeast	50 g sugar
50 ml milk	qtr. nutmeg, grated
40 g butter	salt

Warm the milk until it is just hot to your finger, add 1 teaspoon of the sugar and the yeast, and stir well. Leave it in a warm place until there is a froth over the top. Have ready a warm mixing bowl. Sift into it the flour, nutmeg, sugar and salt, and rub in the butter. Stir in the yeast mixture, the beaten egg, and the rose-water. Knead well until it is smooth. Put the dough into a greased bowl, cover with a damp cloth and leave to rise in a warm place until it has doubled in size (about one hour). Now beat down the dough to remove the air and knead in the currants thoroughly. Put into a greased 2lb (900 g) loaf or cake tin. Cover with a cloth and set in a warm place to prove for about 30 minutes. The dough should spring back when lightly pressed with a floured finger. Cook in a pre-heated oven at 200C, 400F or Mark 6, for 35 minutes. Although this is called a cake, it is really a light bun-loaf. Cut into slices and butter. (From *The Isle of Wight Cook Book* by Johanna Jones.)

The title page of *The Queen's Closet Opened*, with a portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I.



Carisbrooke Castle Museum

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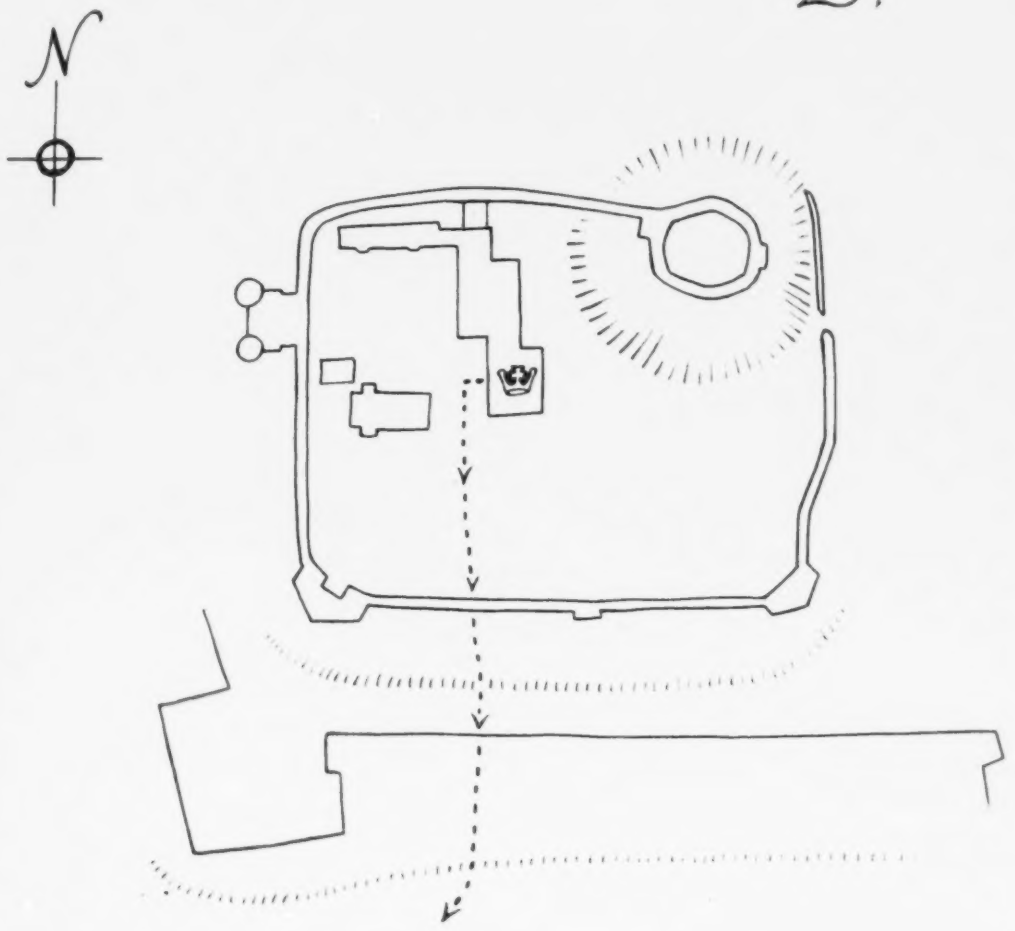
Firebrace document

When next you take your exercise round the walls look carefully at the route I propose, for the night will be pitch dark and we dare not carry a light. Indeed it would be as well for you to commit to memory as much as possible of the route, for a mistaken step could lead to injury or discovery. I trust that my plan will meet with your approval, for I see no better alternative.

D.



Pen and ink drawing of the steps to the keep, from a nineteenth-century manuscript book on the castle by Jeremiah James Colman.

Now and then

This activity involves comparing the appearance of the castle now with its appearance in the past, as shown in old illustrations. It can be used to develop the concept of change (although because of the limitations of the material the changes are relatively recent). It also introduces the idea of evidence and its reliability. At the same time, it provides practice in observation and comparison, and a stimulus for the children's own art work.

Preparation

1. Introduce the idea of changes in buildings. Have the children's homes changed over the last few years? Most of these changes will have been deliberate – repainting, new windows, extensions, perhaps. Discuss other changes which might take place over a longer period of time – changes which are not necessarily deliberate or man-made.

Engraving of the castle's gatehouse and north wall, by W. Cooke, 1814.

Engraving of the interior of the castle, by George Brannon, 1842.

2. Think about pictures as evidence for what a building is like. Ask the children to draw from memory the outside of their school. Compare the individual drawings. How reliable are pictures drawn from memory? (Some castle illustrators may have relied on memory.)

Now ask the children to do pictures of the school building from observation, using a variety of media. Discuss them as evidence for what the building looks like, avoiding any implication that they should have photographic accuracy. Discuss them too as interpretations: some may look more cheerful than others, or more lived-in, for example. Does the medium influence the message?

3. Choose two or three old illustrations of different parts of the castle and reproduce them for your class. Suitable choices would be those on pages 26, 27 and 39. To reduce the number of copies required, children could work in pairs.

At the site

The children locate the parts of the castle depicted in their illustrations. This will involve observation and the noting of similarities and differences between the illustration and what can be seen on site. Children can note the differences by making their own sketches and annotating the illustrations. If possible, they should find the spot from which the artist apparently drew the original picture and mark it on a plan. (This is appropriate only for views within the castle.)

Discuss what the children have found out. What differences are there between what the castle looks like now and how it is depicted in the illustrations? Which differences show that the castle has changed? For example, some of the illustrations show that the banks have been cleared of shrubs and the walls of ivy. Why has this been done? How reliable are the illustrations as evidence for changes? Has the artist exaggerated anything, such as the height of the motte? Was he trying to give a realistic picture of what the castle looked like or was he trying to convey an impression of what he thought a castle ought to look like – gloomy, forbidding, lonely, perhaps? Let the children sketch different parts of the castle as preparation for pictures using various techniques back at school.

A rather fanciful engraving of the castle from *The Itinerant*, 1801

Follow-up

1. Using sketches made during the visit, the children can produce a display of pictures of the castle in a variety of media. Try paint, pastel, pen and ink, scraperboard, linocut, fabric collage and mosaic. The castle was a favourite subject with artists in coloured sands, so if your class brought back coloured sands from Alum Bay, a small quantity could be put to good use in this way. (Most sand pictures, incidentally, were small.)

Discuss the finished results. In what ways could the pictures be evidence, for people in the future, of what the castle looks like today? What are the effects of the different media used?

2. Ask the children to write interviews with some of the nineteenth-century artists whose pictures have been studied. The teacher can provide some ideas for questions. Which bits of the castle did you draw accurately and which did you alter or exaggerate? Why? Do you prefer the castle as it looks nowadays or as it looked when you did your picture?

Wells, Walls and Treadwheels

This theme begins with the castle's water supply, moves on to aspects of medieval technology and then incorporates a variety of different subjects and skills. It could be used as part of an integrated topic on water. The aims include:

- to show the importance of a reliable water supply in a medieval castle and encourage appreciation of its value today
- to consider the problem of raising heavy weights and show how medieval technology tried to overcome it
- to practise a variety of skills
- to incorporate a variety of disciplines in a castle study

Preparation

1. Discuss the benefits of having water on tap. Make a list of the ways in which a household uses water. Can they be put in any order of priority? If supplies were limited, or had to be carried long distances, how would you economise?
2. Discuss the need for water in a medieval castle. Make sure the needs of animals as well as humans are mentioned. Consider the possibility of a siege, with no access to outside supplies, and perhaps attackers' fires to put out.
3. Try carrying buckets of water. How much water can be carried at once from one end of the playground to the other? Water would have to be carried from the castle well to the kitchen, the stables and other buildings in the courtyard.
4. Discuss with the children how it might be possible to investigate a well – how deep it is and whether it contains water. Ideas might include dropping something down it to see how long it takes to reach the bottom, and lowering a rope. Before the visit, assemble your equipment: for example, water in a jar to empty down the well shaft, a 50 metre length of string, a torch, protected with a clear plastic container or polythene bag, to fasten to one end of the piece of string.

At the site

1. Find the castle's water supply. Provide the children with a plan of the castle and ask them to mark the wells as they find them. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of where the wells are situated.
2. Investigate the well in the keep. This was the castle's original water supply. Sometimes it is possible to see the bottom simply by peering down it; sometimes water is visible and sometimes dead leaves and debris. Use whatever equipment you have brought for your well investigation. If you lower a torch down the well it should be possible for the children to see water if there is any. Make sure the torch is lowered to the very bottom so that it will pick up moisture or mud to provide further evidence of what the well contains. While the torch is at the bottom, mark the string at the top of the well. Later, the string can be laid out along the ground, on the bowling green perhaps, to give children an impression of the depth of the well, and so that it can be measured.
3. Find out how far into the hill the well was dug. Discuss the motte, or mound, on which the keep stands, and establish that it is an artificial mound added to the natural chalk hill. Obviously a good proportion of the well shaft runs through the motte. Ask the children to suggest ways in which they could find out how far the well was sunk into the hill. They will need to think of ways of estimating the height of the motte. The easiest, of course, is to count the number of steps from the courtyard to the keep and multiply by the height of an average step. In fact, this well was not deep enough to provide a reliable water supply. It depended on seepage and dried up when the rainfall was inadequate.

English Heritage

Pouring water down the well: an easy way to demonstrate its depth.

4. Investigate the second well. This is the famous well with its donkey-operated treadwheel for raising buckets of water. Regular demonstrations are given and the visit is well worth any time which may have to be spent queueing outside the well house. Queueing time can be used in distributing and looking at the worksheet (see page 32). A worksheet with specific questions is suggested because time in the well house is generally limited and a quick method of recording information will be necessary.

5. Discuss with the children other ways in which a treadwheel might be useful in a castle for raising heavy weights. There is evidence that treadwheels were used for raising building materials when high buildings (like cathedrals) were under construction. Ask the children to measure or estimate the height of the castle wall in various places and the heights of buildings inside the castle. Where might a treadwheel have been useful?

6. Find out what kind of rock the castle is built on. Look, for example, at the footpath from the village which meets the road near the traffic lights just outside the castle. The children may have seen the chalk Needles or Culver Cliff and be familiar with the Island's chalk backbone. Discuss with the children what happens to water on chalk. Notice the castle's dry moat and lack of surface water. The well had to be deep because of the porous nature of chalk.

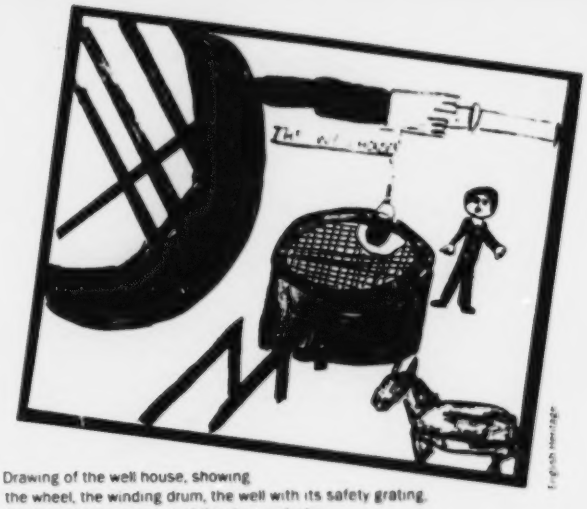
Follow-up

1. See page 6 for ideas for calculations based on information recorded in the well house.

2. Discuss the need for deep wells in chalk landscapes. If possible, experiment with a lump of natural chalk: what happens to drops of water placed on it?

3. Because wells had to be deep, treadwheels were common for raising the buckets of water. Encourage the children to experiment with ways of raising weights. The principle of the lever could be explored as a method of raising a heavy weight a short distance. Find out what difference a pulley makes: it gives the advantage of a downwards rather than an upwards pull. A system of multiple pulleys gives a mechanical advantage represented by the number of pulleys. The donkey wheel is an example of another solution to the problem of raising a heavy weight. It is designed to give a mechanical advantage which is represented by the ratio between the circumference of the wheel and the circumference of the winding drum. In effect, the donkey walks about 15 metres (the circumference of the wheel) to raise the bucket nearly 3 metres (the circumference of the winding drum). Discuss what difference it would make to the donkey if the winding drum were made bigger or smaller. Ask the children to design alternative methods of raising water.

4. Discuss the importance of animal-power at the time the treadwheel was made. Compile a list of uses of animal-power in the past. Introduce children to more unusual examples like dogs to turn spits for roasting meat, and horses to turn horizontal gins to power machinery.



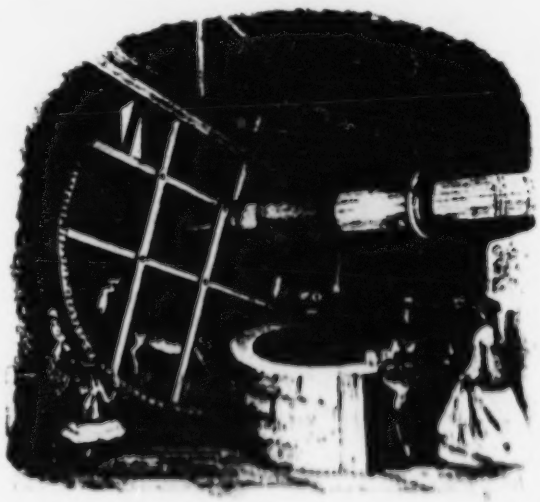
Drawing of the well house, showing the wheel, the winding drum, the well with its safety grating, the bucket, the donkey and the demonstrator.

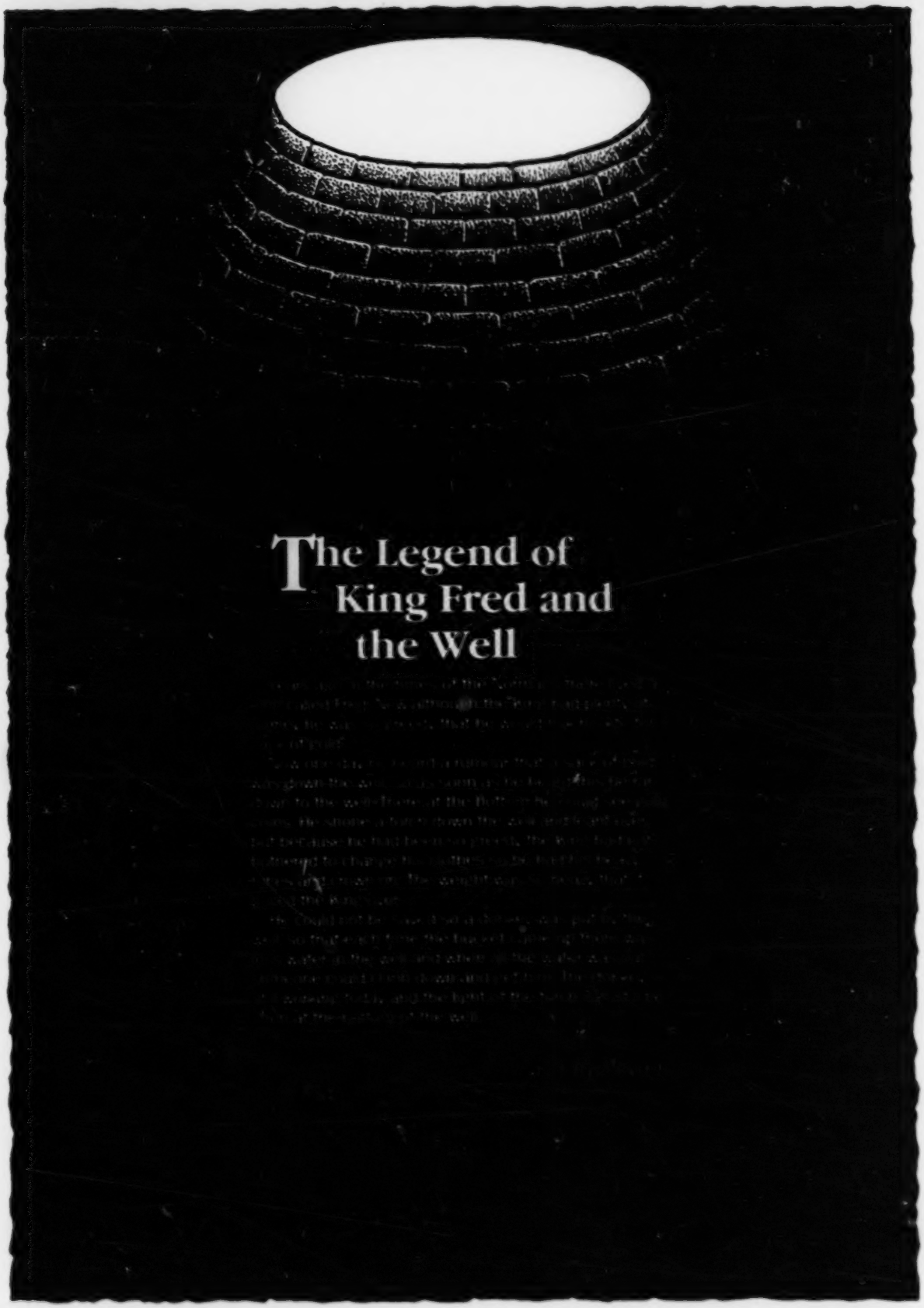
5. Compile an anthology of well house stories and poems. Encourage the children to get away from the rather obvious idea of wearisome donkey-work, perhaps by suggesting titles or providing the beginning of the story.

6. Read *Moonfleet* by J. Meade Falkner. This adventure story of smuggling, treasure and shipwreck, first published in 1898, has become a children's classic. One episode in the story involves a successful hunt for a diamond in the well shaft in Carisbrooke Castle.

7. The limitations on water supply had implications for life-style in the past. The same is true today in countries with water shortages. The well house study could, therefore, lead to consideration of the problems of water supply in Third World countries and the social and economic consequences. Contact Oxfam (274 Banbury Road, Oxford), TEAR fund (100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8QE) or another famine relief organisation, for further information.

The well house, about 1860. Notice the candle which could be lowered down the shaft, and the jugs and beakers on the wall of the well. Until 1904, when it was found to be contaminated, visitors often sampled the well water.





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A Working Model of a Treadwheel

Here is a method of making a model treadwheel from junk.

You will need:

- a shoe box
- the bottoms of two round cheese spread boxes
- a cotton reel
- a knitting-needle
- a length of string
- a top from a tube or bottle to represent the bucket
- a small piece of Blu-tack

Cut away the shaded portions of each cheese spread box, as in the diagram (1).

Cut thin strips of card from the lid of the shoe box and glue or staple to the cheese boxes to form the wooden crosspieces as shown in the diagram (2). Tape the two boxes together. This forms the donkey wheel. Turn the shoe box (without its lid) on to one end and cut away the top portion as shown. The piece that is left represents the well house with the roof and one wall cut away.

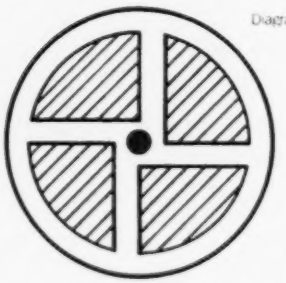


Diagram 1

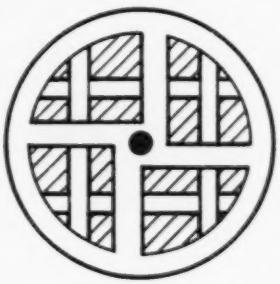
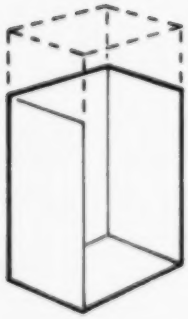
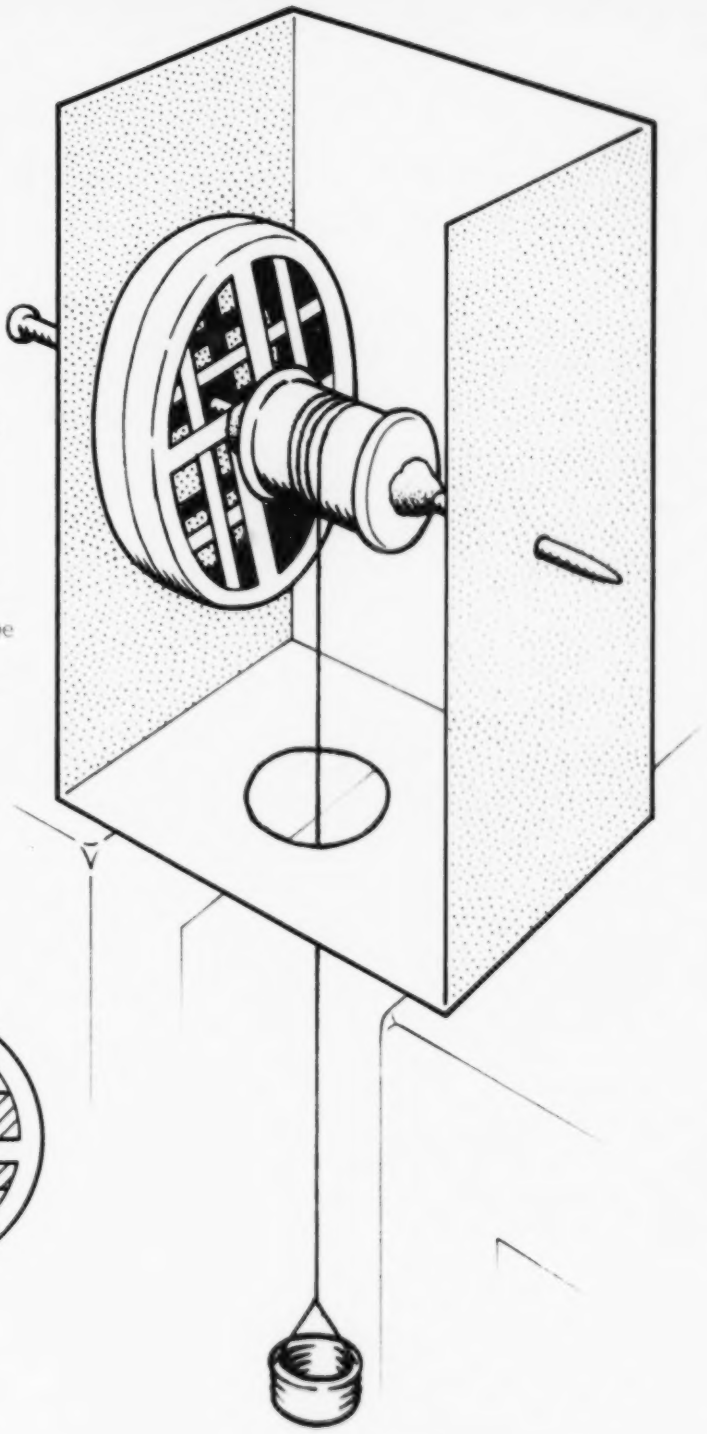


Diagram 2





Push the knitting-needle through the left 'wall' of the shoe box about 6cm from the 'floor' and the same distance from the 'back wall'. Push the knitting-needle carefully through the centre of the wheel, thread the cotton reel on to the needle and then push the point of the needle through the opposite wall. Position the wheel close to the left wall with the cotton reel about 2 cm away from it (3). Fix the reel firmly in place with the Blu-tack, so that when the wheel is turned the needle and reel turn too. Tape one end of the piece of string to the cotton reel and fasten the other end to the 'bucket'. Cut a hole in the floor of the well house in an appropriate spot to represent the well. Support the model on two chairs or tables with a gap between them and raise the bucket by turning the wheel.

Well House Fact Sheet

1.The Facts

The well is _____ metres deep.

The bucket holds 9 gallons.

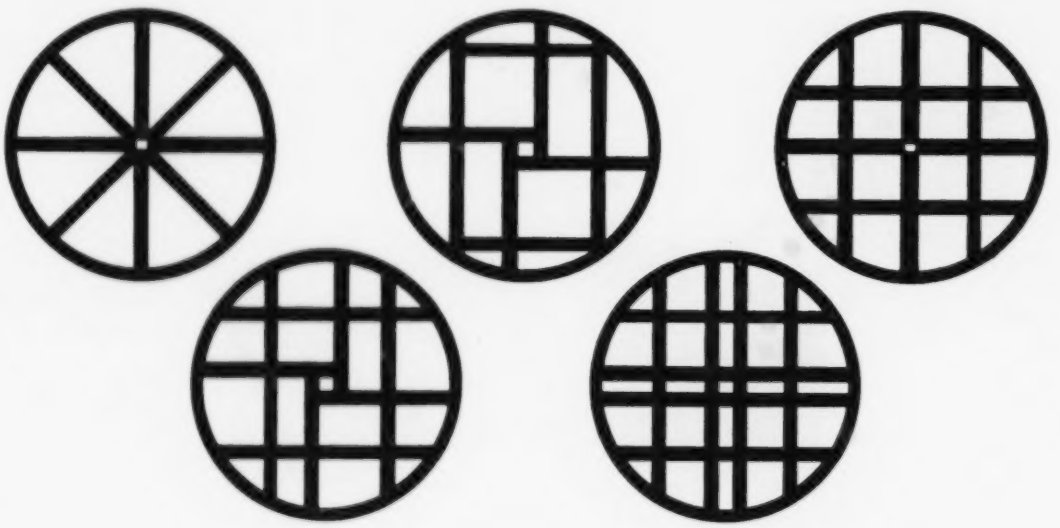
The wheel is about 15 metres in circumference.

The winding drum is about 3 metres in circumference.

It took the donkey _____ minutes to draw the bucket up _____ metres.

It took _____ seconds for water to fall from the top of the well to the bottom.

The crosspieces on the treadwheel are arranged like this: (Tick the correct diagram.)



The donkey who gave our demonstration was named _____ She is _____ years old.

Before donkeys were used, the treadwheel was worked by _____ or _____

2.The Calculations

How long would it take the donkey to raise the bucket from the bottom of the well? _____

How many times would the wheel have to turn to raise the bucket from the bottom of the well? _____

On average, a person living in this country uses about 36 gallons of water each day. How many nine-gallon buckets of water would each person need? _____

How many people are there in your family? _____

According to the average, how many nine-gallon buckets would your family need each day? _____

Assuming the donkey didn't get tired, how long would it take to raise enough water from the bottom of the well for your family each day? _____

Booking a Visit

Free Educational Visits

Carisbrooke Castle is in the care of English Heritage. Like other English Heritage properties, it may be visited free of charge by parties of school-children or full-time students, provided arrangements have been made in advance. Application forms for free admission are available from the State Apartments Supervisor, Osborne House, or from the Education Service of English Heritage, and completed forms should be sent to Osborne House at least a fortnight before the visit. There are some restrictions on the issue of free permits. They are not available for Bank Holidays or for Saturdays or Sundays from May to September. Not more than 100 pupils may be admitted free from any one school in one day. There is also a limit on the total number of free admissions allowed in one day, so it is advisable to book early if you intend to visit in April, May or June. A free admission permit also entitles the teacher to make a free visit beforehand as preparation.

How to get there

The castle is situated on a hill half a mile south of the village of Carisbrooke and about a mile and a half west of Newport, the capital of the Island. There are coach and car-parks immediately outside the castle entrance. For those relying on public transport, a bus service operates between Newport and the castle in the summer months (generally June to September). Alternatively, the village of Carisbrooke is on a bus route which operates throughout the year. Allow about 15 minutes for the walk from the village to the castle; there is a choice of routes using lanes and footpaths, the shortest involving a stiff climb up the chalk hillside which can be slippery in wet weather. It is also possible to walk from Newport, but this takes about half an hour. For information on bus services, contact Southern Vectis, tel. 0983 522456.

The Visit

Allow enough time. The site covers seven acres. Most school parties spend a morning or afternoon at the castle, but it is possible to occupy children for an entire day so long as enough activities have been planned. It is often necessary to queue for the well house. Only a little of the castle open to the public is under cover – the great hall, the well house and the chapel – and it is important for the children to wear suitable clothes and shoes. The castle walls and keep can be surprisingly draughty and cold, and there are a lot of steps to climb.

Safety is important too. There should be a ratio of at least one adult to every fifteen children, and children must be supervised throughout the visit. Teachers and children should all be aware of the hazards of narrow rampart walks and uneven steps, especially when rain has made them slippery.

Facilities

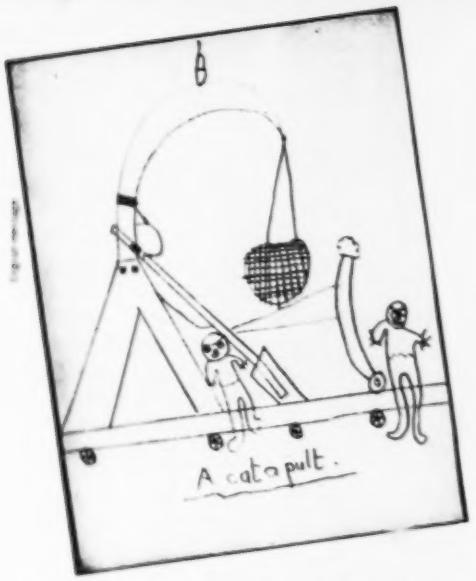
There is an Education Room in the castle, equipped with video, artefacts, reproductions and models relating to the building and its history, for teachers to use with their classes. If you would like to book one hour's use of the room, contact the State Apartments Supervisor, Osborne House, if possible when you apply for your free pass.

There are lavatories inside the castle courtyard.

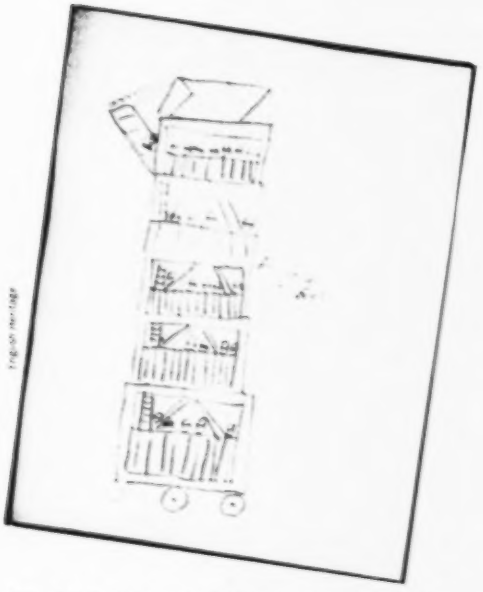
A cafeteria is in operation during the summer (usually from Easter to September, but check with the castle's Head Custodian), but accommodation is limited. There is plenty of space for picnics on the bowling green, in the moats round the castle, and also in the castle courtyard.

The courtyard, including the chapel and the ground floor of the great hall, is accessible to visitors in wheel-chairs, and vehicles with disabled passengers are allowed access to the courtyard.

The Education Room.
Daniel, aged 6, visited the castle with his class, saw some armour in the Education Room and drew this picture afterwards.



Drawing of a catapult by a 7 year old from Niton Primary School.



Drawing of a model siege tower displaying careful observation.

Useful addresses

To apply for free admission and to book use of the Education Room:

Derek Lane
Osborne House
East Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO32 6JY
Tel. 0983 200022

For general education enquiries and information about English Heritage's Education Service:

Education Service
English Heritage
15 Great Marlborough Street
London W1V 1AF
Tel. 01-734 6010 ext. 810

For information on castle opening times etc.:

The Head Custodian
Carisbrooke Castle
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1XY
Tel. 0983 522107

For educational materials on other Isle of Wight sites:

The Warden
The Teachers' Centre
Upper St. James's Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1LL
Tel. 0983 524233

Other visits

A visit to Yarmouth Castle, Isle of Wight, also in the care of English Heritage, could be used for further study of the development of fortifications. (See English Heritage Teachers' pack.) Charles I's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, is buried in St. Thomas's Church, Newport. A memorial, paid for by Queen Victoria, after the discovery of Elizabeth's coffin during the rebuilding of the church, depicts the dead Princess lying with her head on an open Bible.

Bibliography

Books for Teachers

This is a small selection from the large number of books available. Many of the books intended for adults are well illustrated from contemporary sources, and these illustrations are often useful for evidence work with children.

Carisbrooke Castle

English Heritage, *Carisbrooke Castle*, HBMCE, 1985. This is the guide book.

Jack Jones, *The Royal Prisoner*, Lutterworth, 1965

Percy Stone, *Architectural Antiquities of the Isle of Wight*, vol. II, published privately, 1891

Castles in General

Brian Davison, *The New Observer's Book of Castles*, Warne, 1979

Joseph and Frances Gies, *Life in a Medieval Castle*, Abelard, 1974

H.W. Koch, *Medieval Warfare*, Bison Books, 1978. Very well illustrated with photographs and contemporary material.

D.F. Renn, *Norman Castles in Britain*, Humanities Press, 1968

Social Life

Alison and Michael Bagenal, *Medieval People*, (Music from the Past Series), Longman, 1987

Alison and Michael Bagenal, *This Merry Company*, OUP, 1979. Includes music for a medieval castle, advice on costume improvisation and drama.

Alison and Michael Bagenal, *Tudor England*, (Music from the Past Series), Longman, 1987

Maggie Black, *Food and Cooking in Medieval Britain*, HBMCE, 1985

Peter Brears, *Food and Cooking in Seventeenth Century Britain*, HBMCE, 1985

Peter Brears, *Food and Cooking in Sixteenth Century Britain*, HBMCE, 1985

Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, Yale, 1978

Margaret Wade Labarge, *A Baronial Household of the Thirteenth Century*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965. Gives insight into the life of a wealthy household at the time of Countess Isabella de Fortibus.

The Well

J. Kenneth Major, *Animal-Powered Machines*, Shire, 1985

Books for Children

Again this is a small selection from a large number of books published.

Castles

Althea, *Castle Life*, Evans, 1977

Brian Davison, *Explore a Castle*, Hamish Hamilton, 1982

Brian Davison, *Looking at a Castle*, Kingfisher Books, 1987. For younger children.

Department of the Environment, *Castles, A Guide for Young People*, HMSO, 1977

Judy Hindley, *The Time Traveller Book of Knights and Castles*, Usborne, 1976. Colourful, detailed, cartoon-style illustrations.

Steven Jeffreys, *A Medieval Siege*, Wayland, 1973. Contemporary illustrations.

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Kate Pretty and Louise Nevett, *Build Your Own Castle*, Aladdin Books, Franklin Watts, 1975

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Sheila Sancha, *The Castle Story*, Kestrel Books, 1979. Line drawings reconstruct and repeople castle ruins.

R.J. Unstead, *See Inside a Castle*, Kingfisher, 1977

Social Life

Amanda Clark, *Growing up in Elizabethan Times*, Batsford, 1980

Jean Ellenby, *The Medieval Household*, 1984, Dinosaur, C.U.P. Simple text, clear pictures.

Jean Ellenby, *The Stuart Household*, 1981, Dinosaur, C.U.P.

Jean Ellenby, *The Tudor Household*, 1985, Dinosaur, C.U.P.

Fiction

J. Meade Falkner, *Moonfleet*. Adventure story of smuggling and shipwreck, including a hunt for treasure in the well of Carisbrooke Castle.

Films and Videos

Looking at a Castle

The Norman Conquest of England

Obtainable on free loan from English Heritage, P.O. Box 43, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 0XW.

Slides and Software

Castles (A114): set of 12 slides showing development of castles.

Fletcher's Castle (Fernleaf). Castle-building computer simulation.

Both distributed by the Slide Centre, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9HS.

Posters

A set of nine full-colour photographic posters showing the development of castles and later fortifications can be purchased from English Heritage Postal Sales, P.O. Box 43, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 0XW. The set includes a poster of Carisbrooke Castle.

Cassettes and Records

Cassettes are available for use in conjunction with Alison and Michael Bagenal's Music from the Past series and *This Merry Company*.

Two Elizabethan composers have associations with the castle. Robert Johnson was Sir George Carey's lutenist and also a composer. John Dowland, a prolific composer of both instrumental and vocal music, enjoyed the patronage of Lady Carey.

Dowland Lute Songs (ETC/XTC Harmonica Mundi).

Elizabethan Lute Songs and Solos (EMX 2101 EMI). Includes compositions by Dowland.

English Lute Duets (BIS LP 267 Conifer). Includes lute pieces by Johnson.

First year pupils from West Wight Middle School re enact a medieval feast inside the castle

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Carisbrooke Castle Museum

The Keep at Carisbrooke Castle

Watercolour of the keep of Carisbrooke Castle by John Nixon, c.1790.

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